MISO BLACK COD • EXTRA-CHEESY GRITS • FRITO PIE

RADISH TOAST • SPICY MARGARITAS • SOPA SECA

Cook's Country

A Sweet Taste of Spring

STRAWBERRY COBBLER PAGE 37

APRIL/MAY 2023
$7.99 U.S./$9.99 CANADA

AMERICA'S TEST KITCHEN

VISIT…

LANZAROTE
Caliente.COM

INSIDE THE TEST KITCHEN

Behind the Scenes
Senior Editor Jessica Rudolph gets a helping hand from her children as she works on developing her Strawberry Cobbler recipe (page 37).

Cook's Country®

Editor in Chief Toni Tipton-Martin
Editorial Director Bryan Roof
Executive Editor Scott Kathan
Executive Editor, Creative Content Morgan Bolling
Deputy Food Editor Nicole Konstantinakos
Deputy Editor Megan Ginsberg
Senior Editors Matthew Fairman, Jessica Rudolph
Senior Photo Test Cook Lawman Johnson
Test Cooks Mark Huxsoll, Amanda Luchtel, Kelly Song

Copy Editors Amelia Freidline, Katrina Ávila Munichiello, April Poole
Executive Editor, Digital Mari Levine
Contributing Editor Eva Katz
Senior Science Research Editor Paul Adams

Executive Editors, ATK Reviews Hannah Crowley, Lisa McManus
Deputy Editor, ATK Reviews Kate Shannon
Senior Editors, ATK Reviews Miye Bromberg, Carolyn Grillo
Associate Editor, ATK Reviews Chase Brightwell
Assistant Editor, Digital, ATK Reviews Sawyer Phillips
Assistant Editors, ATK Reviews Valerie Sizhe Li, Sarah Sandler

Creative Director John Torres
Photography Director Julie Cote
Art Director Maggie Edgar
Art Director, ATK Reviews Marissa Angelone
Associate Art Director Kristen Jones
Graphic Designer Rose Flynn
Senior Staff Photographers Steve Klise, Daniel J. van Ackere
Photographer Kevin White
Senior Photography Producer Meredith Mulcahy

Senior Director, Creative Operations Alice Carpenter
Executive Managing Editor, Creative Operations Todd Meier
Senior Print Production Specialist Lauren Robbins
Production & Imaging Coordinator Amanda Yong
Production & Imaging Specialists Tricia Neumyer, Dennis Noble
Assistant Test Kitchen Director Alexxa Benson
Test Kitchen Shopping & Receiving Lead Heather Tolmie
Senior Kitchen Operations Assistant Crispin Lopez
Ingredient Receiving Coordinator Christopher Miller
Kitchen Facilities and Equipment Coordinator Ethan Rogers
Executive Editor, Video & Cooking School Christie Morrison
Culinary Producers Alli Berkey, Janette Zepeda
Assistant Culinary Producer Mel Velasco

Chief Financial Officer/Interim CEO Jackie McCauley Ford
Chief Creative Officer Jack Bishop
VP, Television, Video & Podcast Mark Levine
Director, Public Relations & Communications Brian Franklin
Hosts & Executive Editors, Television Bridget Lancaster, Julia Collin Davison
Director of Customer Support Timothy Quinn
Customer Support Specialists Nanda-Devi Davies, Michaela Gilgenbach, Danielle Lutz

Chief Digital Officer Fran Middleton
VP, Marketing Natalie Vinard
Editorial Director, Digital Content Kevin Pang
Director, Audience Acquisition & Partnerships Evan Steiner
Director, Social Media Marketing & Emerging Platforms Kathryn Przybyla
Senior Social Media Manager Charlotte Errity
Social Media Manager Norma Tentori
Social Media Coordinator Sarah Ahn
Community Engagement Coordinator Karen Tran

Chief Revenue Officer Sara Domville

Senior VP, Human Resources & Organizational Development Colleen Zelina
VP, Technology Dustin Brandt

Food Stylists Joy Howard, Elle Simone Scott

Circulation Services PWX Solutions

Photographer: Nicole Capri Creative

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

I USED TO SAY that my middle son's first words were, "Cook. Cook." That's because he was always in the kitchen with me, clanging around in the lower cabinet that I staged with his favorite pots, pans, and wooden spoons. He crawled and then toddled into the kitchen whenever I was making dinner or testing recipes for work. Mixing batter was particularly fun for him. As he got older, watching television food personality Alton Brown became a favorite pastime. And when he was a high school junior, he published a recipe and story for *Edible Austin*, explaining his love of the kitchen.

"My love of cooking probably came from my mom—a writer and cookbook author. Over the years she's concocted new recipes and exposed our family to all sorts of really weird ingredients, and we have always been her willing guinea pigs. But there came a day when, instead of being Pinky, I wanted to be the Brain. While visiting my grandmother in Los Angeles, my mother finally gave me full rein to use kitchen knives—I was 11 years old and it would be the first time I would cook alone . . . After that I was hooked."

From then on, Christian became a kitchen whiz kid. We planted a garden where he harvested fresh vegetables and herbs for making omelets without a recipe. As his confidence grew, he branched out to French toast and pancakes. He studied the protein content of flours, substituted organic whole wheat in recipes, and made his own sour milk. "I became the mad scientist of the kitchen—applying permutations and computations to our waffles and pancakes, just like Alton Brown."

Not long after that, I found him in the kitchen with one of my cookbooks open on the counter. Chocolate soufflé for an after-school treat? Coconut layer cake for a class party? No recipe was too ambitious. When he was a senior, Christian and his guy friends planned, shopped for, prepared, and served an herbed roast leg of lamb dinner for the girls in their group. And today, even though he is a busy medical resident, he manages to meal prep on Sundays so that he is well nourished during the week. He is fulfilling the mission he set out for himself way back then: cooking as an expression of independence, confidence, and self-care. "And also because it's still fun. I love when all of the aromas waft into the air and linger in the house. I enjoy mixing different flavors and seeing how they taste together—it's therapeutic."

My job is making sure everyone can experience the pleasures of preparing and sharing great food at the table. So while it was poignant to remember how Christian's passion for the kitchen started, you can't imagine my delight when *Cook's Country* Senior Editor Jessica Rudolph came into the test kitchen with her little ones in tow. Her beautiful children brightened everyone's spirits. But it was also evident that Jess's children took great joy in being with their mom in our grand kitchen.

Jess gave birth to her daughter, Noa, at the beginning of the pandemic. She developed and tested recipes from home while learning how to confidently mother at the same time—each role shaping the other, she says (see image at left). She struggled emotionally with the commitment to creating excellent recipes remotely while raising two young kids. Jess explained it to me this way: "My ultimate goal prior to motherhood was to produce scene-stealing, show-offy recipes. I loved entertaining, and my recipes at work reflected that. These days, the parameters have changed. I've streamlined. Each ingredient is double- and triple-checked to make sure it's pulling its weight. Same with each pot, pan, utensil. If I call for a piece of equipment, it had better be worth the hassle of dragging it out and cleaning it up."

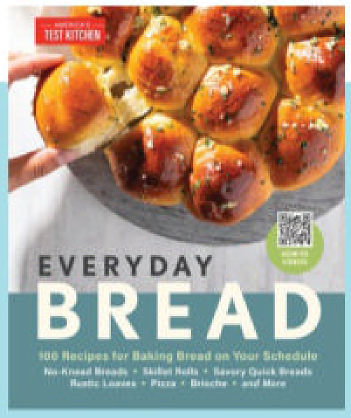
And yet, she affirms, "It's not all about getting in and out of the kitchen as quickly as possible. I've rediscovered a bit of the wonder of creating things by hand through Noa's eyes. Sometimes a hand-kneaded dough or stirred-together batter tastes better than its machine-aided counterpart because of the joy found (and shared) in the process of making it. And, yes, I've even come to embrace the mess too."

And so can you, whether you're shepherding kids or making a special dish to celebrate someone you love. There's inspiration for everyone in this issue.

Happy Mother's Day from our kitchens to yours!

TONI TIPTON-MARTIN

Editor in Chief


AMERICA'S TEST KITCHEN
EVERYDAY
BREAD
100 Recipes for Baking Bread on Your Schedule
No-Knead Breads • Skillet Rolls • Savory Quick Breads
Rustic Loaves • Pizza • Brioche • and More

BREAD BAKING MADE CONVENIENT? YES

Everyday Bread

Introducing the only bread-baking cookbook that lets you choose what to do and when. Learn seven core failproof recipes that offer pauses in prep and baking tasks and teach how to manipulate the dough for different shapes and flavors for a practically endless array of breads. Another way we ensure your success: Twenty QR codes in the cookbook link to online how-to videos. Go to AmericasTestKitchen.com/everydaybread to order your discounted copy today.

12

16

6

FEATURES

6 ON THE ROAD: MY PI PIZZA
Where history and crust run deep.

9 GRILLED CAESAR ASPARAGUS
Char-grilled asparagus and pungent Caesar dressing make for a delicious pairing.

10 BRAISED PORK MARBELLA
We update a classic recipe by swapping rich pork for the chicken.

12 PICKLED RADISH TOAST
Move over, avocado; there's a new toast in town.

13 CREAMY POTATOES AND LEEKS
This cheesy, bread crumb–topped casserole comes together on the stovetop.

14 HOUSE SPECIAL SHRIMP (SHRIMP WITH GARLIC AND JALAPEÑOS)
Fresh, fast "California cooking" with a tether to the Teochew diaspora.

16 FRITO PIE
Looking for a fun, satisfying chili recipe? It's in the bag.

18 ADANA-STYLE KEBABS
These juicy, fragrant, and delicious Turkish-style spiced lamb skewers deserve more attention.

25 KING TRUMPET MUSHROOMS
Your new favorite mushroom takes center stage in this delightfully easy recipe.

28 MISO BLACK COD
You don't need to be a master chef to make this exquisite fish at home.

30 SEARED ROMAINE WITH GINGER DRESSING
In a salad rut? For a change of pace, turn up the heat.

31 EXTRA-CHEESY GRITS
Simple grits are great. These grits are amazing.

32 ANCHO MEZCAL LIQUEUR
Smoky, complex flavor in a bottle.

33 ANCHO-PINEAPPLE MEZCAL MARGARITA WITH TAJÍN
Pineapple juice balances the smoke and spice in this twist on the classic.

34 SOPA SECA DE FIDEOS
This comfort-food dish—a staple in Mexican and Mexican American cuisine—takes one-pan noodles to the next level.

36 STRAWBERRY COBBLER
Simple, rustic, and homey, this warm strawberry dessert aims to please.

30

DEPARTMENTS

4 QUICK BITES

5 ATK REVIEWS
Countertop Compost Bins

21 DINNER TONIGHT
Coriander Salmon with Beets, Oranges, and Avocados
Curried Sweet Potato Soup with Spiced Pepitas
Grilled Chicken Fajitas with Cilantro-Lime Sour Cream
Honey-Soy Steak Tips with Roasted Green Beans
Italian Hoagie Salad
Mussels and Linguine with ’Nduja Cream Sauce
Pork Tenderloin with Blueberry-Ginger Chutney
Roasted Chicken Thighs with Asparagus, Arugula, and Walnut Salad

26 GETTING TO KNOW
Rice

38 COOKING CLASS
Semifreddo

40 INSTANT POT
Chicken and Potato Stew

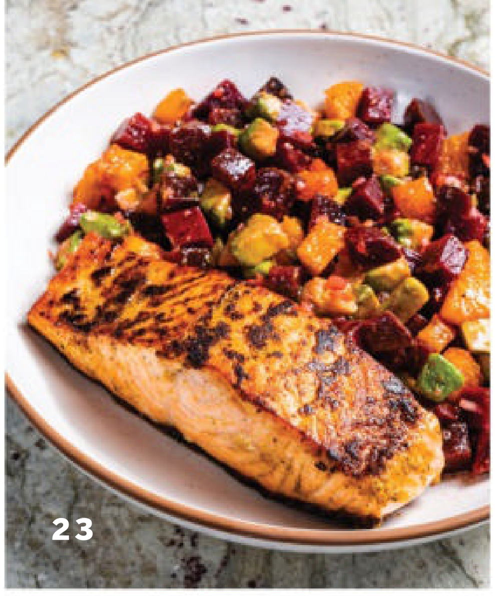
41 HOW TO MAKE
Rhubarb Jam

42 ATK REVIEWS
Bench Scrapers

43 ATK REVIEWS
Canned Diced Tomatoes

44 BONUS RECIPE
Apricot-Honey Sauce

45 COOK’S COUNTRY PORTRAIT
Alice Matthews

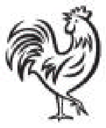

23

31

13

AMERICA’S TEST KITCHEN®

America’s Test Kitchen has been teaching home cooks how to be successful in the kitchen since 1993. Our mission is to empower and inspire confidence, community, and creativity in the kitchen. Millions watch our two shows on public television; read our two flagship magazines (*Cook’s Country* and *Cook’s Illustrated*); and rely on our books, websites, videos, podcasts, and educational products for children. America’s Test Kitchen is located in a state-of-the-art Boston facility with 15,000 square feet of test kitchen and studio space. Learn more at AmericasTestKitchen.com.



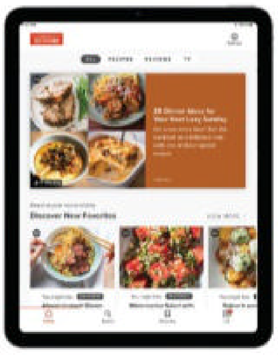
FIND THE ROOSTER!

We’ve hidden a tiny version of the rooster above in a photo in the pages of this issue. Tell us where the rooster is hiding, and we’ll enter you in a random drawing. The first correct entry drawn will win a one-year multisite web membership, and the next two correct entries drawn will receive a copy of *The Complete Cook’s Country TV Show Cookbook*. To enter, go to AmericasTestKitchen.com/rooster and fill out the submission form. All entries for this issue’s drawing must be received by April 30, 2023. The December/January 2023 drawing winner, Paula Westburg of Monticello, Ill., found the rooster on page 20.

WEB EXTRAS

Free for four months online at
AmericasTestKitchen.com

Arroz con Pollo
Arroz con Tocino
Black Beans and Rice
Chicken Biryani
Garlic Fried Rice
Khao Man Gai
Paella for Two
Risotto Milanese
Skirt Steak with Tomato, Corn, and Brown Rice Salad



DOWNLOAD OUR APP

The America’s Test Kitchen app delivers the best-tasting recipes, how-to-cook videos, and more! Download America’s Test Kitchen today and become a culinary master! Go to AmericasTestKitchen.com/app.

Cook’s Country magazine (ISSN 1552-1990), number 110, is published bimonthly by America’s Test Kitchen Limited Partnership, 21 Drydock Avenue, Suite 210E, Boston, MA 02210. Copyright 2023 America’s Test Kitchen Limited Partnership. Periodicals postage paid at Boston, MA, and additional mailing offices, USPS #023453. Publications Mail Agreement No. 40020778. Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to P.O. Box 875, Station A, Windsor, ON N9A 6P2. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Cook’s Country, P.O. Box 6018, Harlan, IA 51593-1518. For subscription and gift subscription orders, subscription inquiries, or change of address notices, visit AmericasTestKitchen.com/support, call 800-526-8447 in the U.S. or 515-237-3663 from outside the U.S., or write to us at Cook’s Country, P.O. Box 6018, Harlan, IA 51593-1518. PRINTED IN THE USA.

QUICK BITES:

TEST KITCHEN TIPS, RECS, AND OTHER TIDBITS TO CHEW ON

by the **Cook's Country** *team*

MESCLUN MIX

OLIVIA'S ORGANICS
Spring Mix
Excellent source of Vitamins A, C & K
Your purchase supports Olivia's Organics Children's Foundation.
Triple Washed
Keep Refrigerated Net Wt. 5 oz.(142g)

Mixing and matching greens is a great way to build a flavorful salad. When you buy a container of mesclun mix—which can also be labeled spring mix—it already includes a variety of greens, such as baby lettuces; baby spinach; arugula; and more robust options such as beet greens, Swiss chard, and radicchio. The word "mesclun" derives from a French word meaning "mixture."

You can make your own mesclun mix by combining your favorite young, delicate greens. We recommend pairing mild-flavored greens, such as baby red or green lettuce and baby spinach, with stronger-flavored greens, such as arugula and endive. Beet greens, Swiss chard, radicchio, baby kale, watercress, and even fresh herbs can be added to spruce up the mix. Choose the flavors you like best. **–Megan Ginsberg**

If you buy prewashed mesclun mix, you should store it in the refrigerator in its original plastic container or bag. (Add a paper towel to the container to help absorb moisture and discourage rot.) If you are making your own mix using unpackaged or unwashed greens, you'll want to lightly roll the greens in paper towels and store them in an open produce bag in the refrigerator. Be sure to wash them before using and dry them thoroughly using a salad spinner so that there's little to no water clinging to the greens, which would dilute whatever dressing you serve them with.

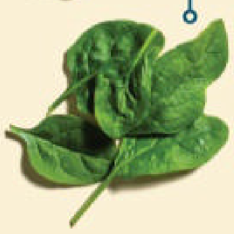
RADICCHIO
Neither a cabbage nor a lettuce, radicchio belongs to the chicory family. It has the distinct bitterness of chicory, a bright color, and a sharp crunch.

ARUGULA
While typically used as a salad green, arugula is technically a member of the mustard family. It packs a peppery punch.

BABY KALE
Baby kale is simply kale that has been harvested while still small and tender. It is milder than mature kale.

ENDIVE
Pleasantly bitter and mildly nutty, endive is also a member of the chicory family. It is cream-colored and bullet-shaped, with pale yellow tips.

RED AND GREEN LEAF
These lettuces are mild and let the flavors of the stronger components stand out. Including red leaf lettuce will add a pop of color to your mix.



BABY SPINACH
Like baby kale, baby spinach is spinach that has been harvested before it matures. The leaves are sweeter, milder, and more tender than mature spinach.

YOUR ICE CREAM MAKER INSERT CAN DO MORE THAN CHURN ICE CREAM

An ice cream maker canister takes up a lot of freezer space. Is it worth having it in there even when you're not regularly making ice cream? I think so. Here are some other ways you can use it. **–Morgan Bolling**

1. **Keep white wine or rosé chilled on the table.** It acts similarly to a bucket of ice at a fancy restaurant.
2. **Cool down a batch of soup quickly.** Let a soup, stew, or chili cool down a little, so it's not piping hot. Then place a double layer of gallon-size zipper-lock bags inside the base of the ice cream maker and pour the warm soup in. Let it sit in the frozen canister until it's cool enough to transfer to the fridge or freezer.
3. **Serve cold items at a barbecue.** Place a quart container of egg salad or potato salad in the frozen canister to keep it cold and food-safe on a hot day.
4. **Make slushy margaritas.** Add the ingredients for a margarita or other frozen cocktail to the frozen canister and churn until it gets slushy—so fun for a party! Similarly, you can add soda or juice to an ice cream maker and churn it to make a kid-friendly frozen drink.

INGREDIENTS THAT BRING BIG SMOKY FLAVOR—NO FIRE NEEDED

I love smoking meat and vegetables on my backyard kettle grill. But when cooking outside is not an option, you can add smoky flavor in the kitchen. Here are the ingredients that I use to bring a taste of glowing embers to my indoor cooking. **–Scott Kathan**

CHIPOTLE CHILES

Jalapeños that have been smoked and dried, chipotle chiles are potent flavor bombs. They are sold three ways: as whole dried chiles, as powder, and in tangy adobo sauce in cans. Chipotle powder adds heat and intense smoke flavor to chilis, rubs, and sauces. The canned chiles are great too; try stirring a little of the spicy adobo sauce into mayonnaise or tahini for a flavor-packed condiment.

LIQUID SMOKE

This ingredient has gotten a bad rap because there are inferior versions of liquid smoke out there that are filled with chemicals and junk. But good versions, such as Wright's, are just condensed smoke in liquid form and taste very smoky but clean. Liquid smoke is great to use in barbecue sauce and brines. Use it judiciously, as a little goes a long way.

SMOKED PAPRIKA

Paprika is made from dried, ground ripe red chiles. The Spanish and Hungarians are masters of sweet paprika, and there are great versions made in California too. When you smoke those peppers before drying (or as part of the drying process), you get smoked paprika. As with regular paprika, smoked paprika can be mild (often labeled "sweet") or spicy, depending on the variety of chile used. This smoky spice is great in rubs for roasted poultry or meats, stirred into vinaigrettes, and on any egg dish, to name a few favorite uses.

ATK REVIEWS

SHOULD YOU GET A COMPOST BIN?

by Sawyer Phillips

You'll be surprised by how much waste you can divert from the trash when you compost.

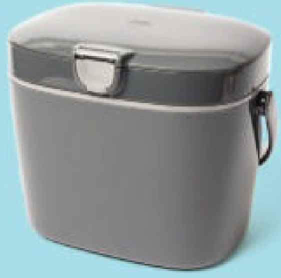
THINGS CAN GET messy fast when you're cooking—especially if you're doing a lot of prep work like peeling carrots, stemming herbs, or dicing onions. Those scraps can clutter your workspace and often end up in the trash. Americans contribute billions of pounds of food to landfills every year. Composting those scraps can divert a lot of waste from landfills and reduce the resulting methane emissions. A countertop compost bin allows you to neatly store food scraps until you can transfer them to a backyard setup or a bin for curbside pickup.

These handy bins are often more aesthetically pleasing than plastic utility buckets or bags, and the best models strike the perfect balance between design and functionality. Some also offer helpful features that simplify storing scraps, including filters that contain smells. Most models can be used with or without biodegradable bags. We liked lightweight, easy-to-clean models with sturdy handles and openings that measured at least 6.25 inches. Bins with stay-open flip-top lids were easy to open when our hands were wet or dirty from cracking eggs or performing other everyday cooking tasks.

PRO TIP

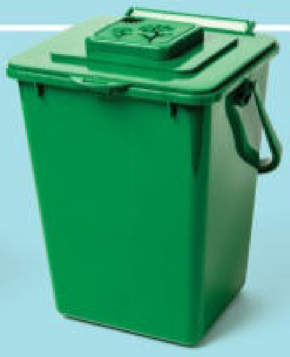
Lining your bin with a compostable bag can make cleanup easier. However, bags left in the bin for more than a week might begin to disintegrate and some local composting programs don't allow them.

OUR TOP PICKS



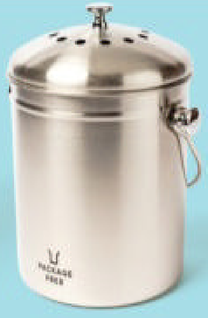
OVERALL WINNER

OXO Good Grips Easy-Clean Compost Bin—1.75 Gal
Model: 13273400
Price: $32.95



BEST FOR LARGER HOUSEHOLDS

Exaco Eco 2000 Kitchen Compost Pail
Model: 2000-NP
Price: $21.99



BEST STAINLESS-STEEL MODEL

Package Free Compost Bin Container
Model: n/a
Price: $24.99

Web subscribers can see the complete results chart at **AmericasTestKitchen.com/may23.**

My Pi Pizza

Where history and crust run deep.

by Bryan Roof; photos by Steve Klise

Dark-colored pans help the crust crisp and brown properly.

CHICAGO PIZZA EXPERT and author Steve Dolinsky and I take our seats at a red-and-white checkered picnic table out in front of My Pi Pizza in Chicago's Bucktown neighborhood, just as owner Rich Aronson emerges with a signature deep-dish pizza. Rich cuts the pizza into quarters with the blade of a stiff metal spatula and lifts a slice by its crust, holding it high in the air to show that the crust is sturdy and crisp enough to support the weight of the cheese, sausage, and sauce without bending. "The original Chicago [deep-dish] pie looks like this one. It's thin, you can hold it with your hands, it doesn't flop," Steve says.

The pizza itself is surprisingly light in texture with a noticeable flakiness to the crust. The toppings, an equal distribution of gooey mozzarella cheese, fragrant sausage, and herbaceous sauce, are balanced, with none of them fighting for attention over the others. Steve says, "With a great piece of pizza, you want to get equal bites crust, cheese, sauce, topping, which is why it's pleasant and a good experience."

Steve explains that one of the defining features of deep-dish pizza is its interior wall of crust. "Essentially the dough is pressed up along the walls [of the pan], and then the pie sits a little lower in the middle." Rich adds, "It's deep because of that edge crust."

The two elaborate further on another subcategory of pizza that is often confused with deep dish that Steve refers to as "deep-pan" pizza. This pizza lacks the noticeable high interior crust and, instead, the cheese and sauce often spill over the edge of the dough in the pan and form a brittle burnt cheese edge on the crust, similar to what you might find with Detroit pizza. These deep-pan pizzas, often but not always, tend to have a thicker, more doughy crust than deep dish and present as the fork-and-knife casserole-like pizzas that Chicago has become most widely known for. A slice of deep-pan pizza typically would not be able to support its own weight if held by the crust, as Rich demonstrates with his deep dish.

Rich's father, Larry Aronson, opened the original My Pi Pizza in 1971. At the time, he was enamored with deep-dish pizza but felt that many of the versions he tried lacked balance. Being a baker and "tinkerer in the kitchen," he set out to develop his own recipe, hence the name "My Pi."

Eventually, Larry went on to open more than 20 My Pi Pizza restaurants in nine states and claims to be the first to sell deep-dish pizza outside of Illinois. But after a legal dispute with franchisees in the '90s, he decided to close all the restaurants. Rich, who grew up working in the My Pi pizzerias and subsequently spent 10 years cooking in fine-dining restaurants, opened the current location on North Damen Avenue with his father in 2000. It is now the last remaining outpost of that pizzeria empire.

The construction of Chicago deep-dish pizza is essentially upside down from that of traditional pizzas. Sliced mozzarella covers the dough, followed by the toppings, the sauce, and finally a light sprinkling of grated Parmesan cheese and oregano. Sliced mozzarella, as opposed to shredded, is used to form a protective barrier between the dough and the sauce, which gives the crust the opportunity to crisp during baking.

Sausage is king in Chicago and used much more widely on pizzas than pepperoni. However, in Chicago the sausage is put on the pizza raw. "So when it cooks, all those wonderful oils and herbs and spices render out into the pizza. And that's one of the great things about Chicago pizza," Rich says. "Almost anywhere outside of the Midwest they're going to put on a precooked sausage. The sausage still tastes great, but remember those wonderful oils and herbs and spices? Yeah, they're in the garbage can back at the restaurant. They're not on the pizza."

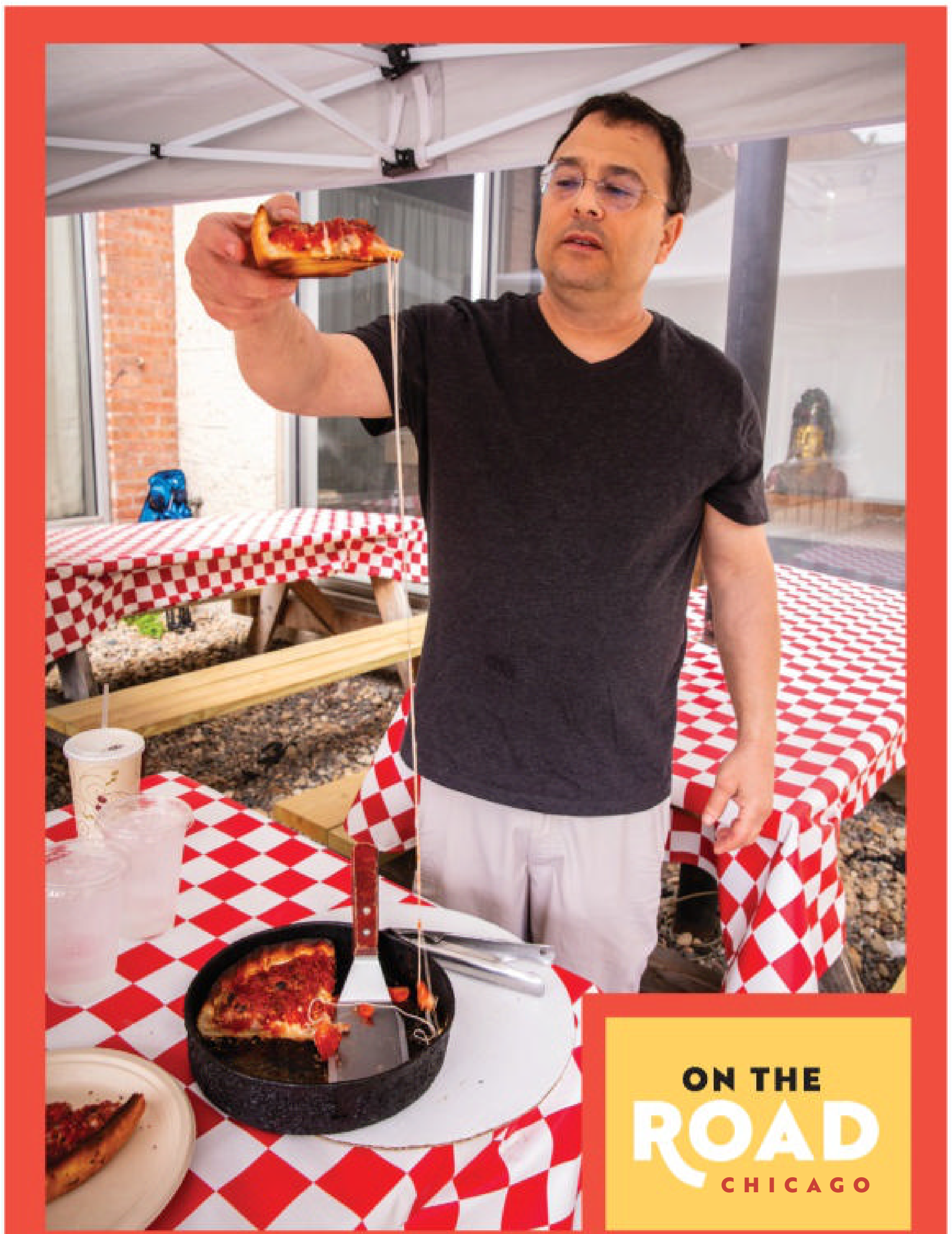
> ***"It's thin, you can hold it with your hands, it doesn't flop."***
>
> **-Steve Dolinksy, Chicago pizza expert**

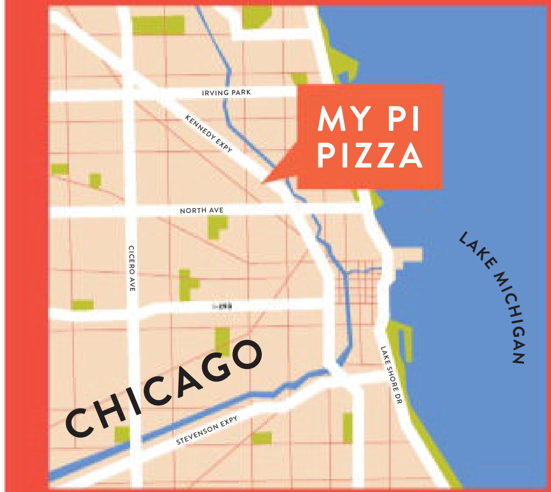
Rich credits My Pi's crisp-tender crust to his father's approach to the dough. The dough should be "moist but not sticky," he says. As he watches a batch of dough knead in the mixer, he smiles and shares, "My dad calls it 'slosh.' You're looking for the dough to slosh around [the mixing bowl]."

The sauce at My Pi is subtly sweet and fortified with herbs and a touch of oil for richness. And surprisingly, some of it remains a mystery to even Rich himself. As pizza scholar Steve tells the story, Larry realized early on that if someone didn't order a sausage pizza, they would be missing out on the flavorful fennel and fat that is rendered from that sausage and collects on the pizza as it cooks. So he created a sauce with a very particular blend of herbs and spices that mimics some of those found in sausage and then some. "And it's no joke, [Rich] has to go to his dad's house to pick up the spice packet that his dad makes," Steve says.

Rich chimes in, "Yeah. I don't know what's in it. He still hasn't told me." He shrugs and says, "Supposedly it's in the will."

Illustration: Sophie Greenspan





From top: My Pi Pizza owner Rich Aronson's deep-dish pizza is crisp enough that each slice can hold its own weight; pizza aficionado and author Steve Dolinsky; deep-dish pies parbaked and ready for mail-order.

CHICAGO DEEP-DISH PIZZA

Serves 4

Total Time: 1¾ hours, plus 1 hour 20 minutes rising

We call for two dark-colored 9-inch cake pans for this recipe. The dark pan color is essential for achieving a crisp bottom on the pizza. If you have only light-colored pans, you can increase the baking time by 5 minutes, but the crust will not be as crisp as in the dark pans. In step 8, if you prefer, transfer the pizzas to a cutting board before slicing.

DOUGH

1 cup plus 2 tablespoons water, room temperature
1 tablespoon instant or rapid-rise yeast
3 cups (15 ounces) all-purpose flour
3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, plus extra for greasing pans
1 teaspoon table salt

SAUCE

1 (28-ounce) can whole peeled tomatoes
1 (8-ounce) can tomato sauce
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
2 teaspoons sugar
2 teaspoons Italian seasoning
1½ teaspoons table salt
1 teaspoon ground fennel
1 teaspoon granulated garlic
½ teaspoon pepper

10 slices deli mozzarella cheese (10 ounces), divided
6 ounces Italian sausage, casings removed, divided
¼ teaspoon dried oregano
¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese

1. FOR THE DOUGH: Combine water and yeast in 1-cup liquid measuring cup and let sit for 5 minutes. Whisk flour, oil, and salt in bowl of stand mixer until oil is evenly incorporated, about 30 seconds.

2. Fit stand mixer with dough hook. Add water-yeast mixture to flour mixture and mix on low speed until no dry flour remains, about 2 minutes. Increase speed to medium and knead until dough is smooth and elastic and clears sides of bowl, about 5 minutes.

3. Transfer dough to unfloured counter and shape into ball. Place dough in lightly greased bowl and turn to coat. Cover bowl tightly with plastic wrap and let dough rise until doubled in size, about 1 hour.

4. FOR THE SAUCE: Meanwhile, transfer whole tomatoes to fine-mesh strainer set over bowl (or colander set in sink). Let tomatoes drain for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Transfer tomatoes to medium bowl and, using kitchen shears or your hands, cut or break tomatoes into ½-inch pieces. Return tomatoes to strainer and let drain for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Return tomatoes to bowl; discard tomato liquid. Stir tomato sauce, oil, sugar, Italian seasoning, salt, fennel, granulated garlic, and pepper into tomatoes; set aside. (Sauce can be refrigerated for up to 2 days.)

5. Adjust oven rack to lowest position and heat oven to 400 degrees. Grease bottoms and sides of 2 dark-colored 9-inch round cake pans with 1 tablespoon oil each. Divide dough evenly between pans, cover with plastic, and let rest for 20 minutes.

6. Using palm of your hand, press 1 piece of dough flat into pan bottom until dough meets edge of pan. Rotating pan as you work, press dough until it reaches about 1 inch up sides of pan. Arrange 5 mozzarella cheese slices in even layer, then press mozzarella into dough gently with your palms. If dough no longer reaches 1 inch up sides, repeat pressing.

7. Break sausage into penny-size pieces and distribute half evenly over mozzarella. Press sausage lightly into mozzarella. Spread half of sauce in even layer on top of sausage, taking care to not push any sauce over edge of dough. Sprinkle pizza with half of oregano, then half of Parmesan. Repeat steps 6 and 7 to shape and top second pizza.

8. Bake pizzas until top edges of crusts are well browned, about 35 minutes. Remove pizzas from oven and let sit for 5 minutes. Using bench scraper or sturdy metal spatula, cut each pizza in pan into 4 wedges. Serve.

MY PI
Classic Chicago Deep Dish Pizza

From top: Owner Rich Aronson explaining how they make and mix the dough; deep-dish pizza, complete with a gooey string of melted cheese, on the outside tables at My Pi Pizza; the unassuming exterior of the truly exceptional pizzeria.

Grilled Caesar Asparagus

Char-grilled asparagus and pungent Caesar dressing make for a delicious pairing.

by Morgan Bolling

The asparagus spears are tossed with dressing before grilling and then drizzled with more dressing after.

ASPARAGUS HAS AN assertive flavor that takes well to grilling and to other strong flavors, such as savory Caesar dressing. I set out to create a recipe for grilled asparagus paired with this creamy elixir.

To begin, I turned to a tried-and-true Caesar dressing from the test kitchen that follows a classic method of slowly whisking extra-virgin olive oil and Parmesan into a pungent mix of lemon juice, egg yolk, garlic, minced anchovies, Dijon mustard, Worcestershire sauce, and plenty of black pepper. The result is a creamy, emulsified dressing with a big, bold hit of umami. I tossed the asparagus with some of this dressing before laying it on a hot grill. The sugar and cheese helped the asparagus brown quickly and develop deep flavor before the spears had time to overcook and turn floppy.

Grilling small croutons felt precious, but toasting slabs of bread on the grill and tearing them to serve added a second level of charred flavor and a pleasantly rustic feel. Finally, a second dose of Parmesan (and anchovies for those anchovy lovers among us) made this salad as well seasoned and appealing as the best classic Caesar out there.

GRILLED CAESAR ASPARAGUS

Serves 4 to 6 Total Time: 1 hour

Use asparagus spears that are at least ½ inch thick near the base. Do not use pencil-thin asparagus spears; they cannot withstand the heat of the grill. You can top the asparagus with anchovies before serving, if desired.

2	**tablespoons lemon juice**
1	**large egg yolk**
2	**garlic cloves, minced**
2	**teaspoons Worcestershire sauce**
2	**teaspoons Dijon mustard**
2	**anchovy fillets, minced**
¾	**teaspoon table salt, divided**
½	**teaspoon pepper, divided**
½	**cup plus 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided**
2	**ounces Parmesan cheese, ½ ounce grated (¼ cup) and 1½ ounces shredded (½ cup)**
1	**(5-inch) piece baguette, cut on bias into ½-inch-thick slices**
2	**pounds (½ inch thick) asparagus, ends trimmed**

1. Whisk lemon juice, egg yolk, garlic, Worcestershire, mustard, anchovies, ½ teaspoon salt, and ¼ teaspoon pepper together in bowl. Whisk in ½ cup oil until smooth. Whisk in grated Parmesan; set aside.

2A. FOR A CHARCOAL GRILL: Open bottom vent completely. Light large chimney starter filled with charcoal briquettes (6 quarts). When top coals are partially covered with ash, pour evenly over grill. Set cooking grate in place, cover, and open lid vent completely. Heat grill until hot, about 5 minutes.

2B. FOR A GAS GRILL: Turn all burners to high; cover; and heat grill until hot, about 15 minutes. Leave all burners on high.

3. Clean and oil cooking grate. Brush bread slices all over with remaining 3 tablespoons oil and sprinkle with remaining ¼ teaspoon salt and remaining ¼ teaspoon pepper. Grill bread, uncovered, until browned, about 1 minute per side. Transfer to large plate.

4. Whisk dressing to recombine and toss asparagus with ⅓ cup dressing on rimmed baking sheet until asparagus is evenly coated. Arrange asparagus on grill perpendicular to grill grates. Grill (covered if using gas), turning occasionally, until asparagus is char-streaked and tender, 2 to 5 minutes. Transfer to serving platter.

5. Tear bread into bite-size pieces. Drizzle asparagus with remaining dressing. Top with shredded Parmesan and torn bread. Serve.

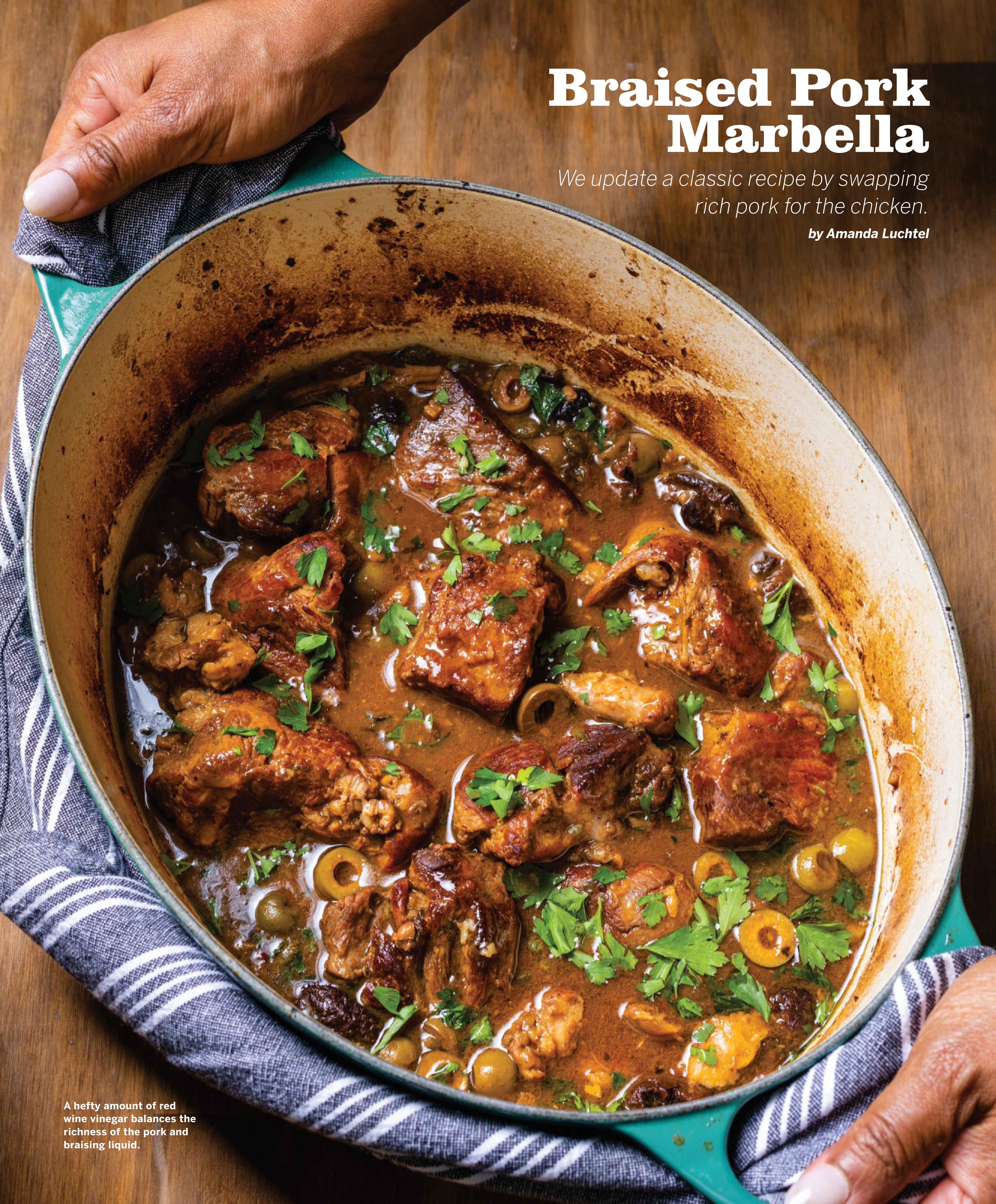
Perpendicular Placement

The long, slim shape of asparagus spears means they can easily sneak through the grill grate. Be sure to arrange the spears perpendicular to the bars to avoid any casualties.

Braised Pork Marbella

We update a classic recipe by swapping rich pork for the chicken.

by Amanda Luchtel



A hefty amount of red wine vinegar balances the richness of the pork and braising liquid.

CHICKEN MARBELLA—a salty-sweet dish of chicken parts slowly simmered with prunes and olives—is an American creation that first appeared in Sheila Lukins and Julee Rosso's influential 1982 tome, *The Silver Palate Cookbook*. The dish was inspired by the authors' time in Spain and in particular by the North African influences in the cuisine of southern Spain. Chicken Marbella was a hit, as was the book. We wanted a luscious pork version as delicious as the original but with a little more richness. Here's how to do it.

Start by breaking down a pork butt (the rich, relatively fatty shoulder cut typically used for pulled pork) into large portions and browning the pieces on all sides in a Dutch oven before transferring them to a plate temporarily. To boost the savory complexity of the dish, add garlic, anchovies, and red pepper flakes to the rendered pork fat. To make sure the sauce will be thick enough at the end of cooking, add a little flour to the pot and then deglaze with chicken broth, dry white wine, and a good splash of red wine vinegar, scraping up any flavorful fond on the bottom of the pan. The amount of vinegar may seem like a lot, but you need it to balance the richness of the pork.

The *Silver Palate* recipe calls for marinating the chicken; we found that you could avoid that step by adding half the capers, olives, and prunes at the beginning of the braise to contribute flavor to the meat and the sauce while it cooked. Once the pork is fork-tender, add the remainder of the prunes, olives, and capers and let the dish sit off the heat for 10 minutes, allowing the prunes to plump and warm through.

● BRAISED PORK MARBELLA

Serves 6 Total Time: 3 to 3½ hours

Pork butt roast is often labeled Boston butt in the supermarket. Avoid buying a pork butt wrapped in netting; it will likely contain smaller, separate lobes of meat rather than one whole roast. If you're using table salt, reduce the amount called for by half. Serve with egg noodles or couscous.

1	**(4-pound) boneless pork butt roast, trimmed**
2	**teaspoons kosher salt**
½	**teaspoon pepper**
2	**tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil**
4	**garlic cloves, chopped**
4	**anchovy fillets, chopped**
¼	**teaspoon red pepper flakes**
1½	**tablespoons all-purpose flour**
2	**cups chicken broth**
1	**cup dry white wine**
¼	**cup red wine vinegar**
1	**cup pitted prunes, halved, divided**
¾	**cup pitted green olives, halved, divided**
¼	**cup capers, divided**
2	**bay leaves**
½	**teaspoon dried oregano**
¼	**cup chopped fresh parsley, divided**

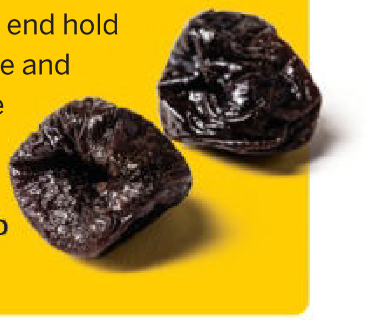
1. Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 325 degrees. Cut pork crosswise into 3 slabs, then cut each slab in half crosswise (some pieces may separate slightly along natural seams; this is OK). Pat pork dry with paper towels and sprinkle all over with salt and pepper. Heat oil in Dutch oven over medium-high heat until just smoking. Add pork and cook until well browned all over, 15 to 18 minutes; transfer to plate.

2. Pour off all but 2 tablespoons fat from pot and return to medium-high heat. Add garlic, anchovies, and pepper flakes and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Stir in flour and cook for 30 seconds. Whisk in broth, wine, and vinegar, scraping up any browned bits and smoothing out any lumps. Stir in half of prunes, half of olives, half of capers, bay leaves, and oregano. Return pork and any accumulated juices to pot and bring to simmer. Cover and transfer pot to oven. Cook until fork inserted into pork meets little to no resistance, 2 to 2½ hours.

3. Remove pot from oven. Add remaining prunes, olives, and capers to pot, submerging them in braising liquid, and let rest, covered, until prunes have softened, about 10 minutes. Discard bay leaves. Stir 2 tablespoons parsley into sauce and season with salt and pepper to taste. Sprinkle with remaining 2 tablespoons parsley. Serve.

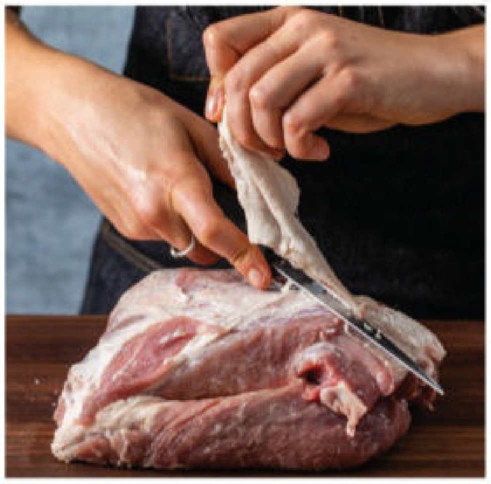
Prunes

Prunes introduce depth, complexity, and a bit of sweetness to the sauce. The prunes we add at the start dissolve into the liquid; the prunes we add at the end hold their shape and contribute a nice textural element to the dish.

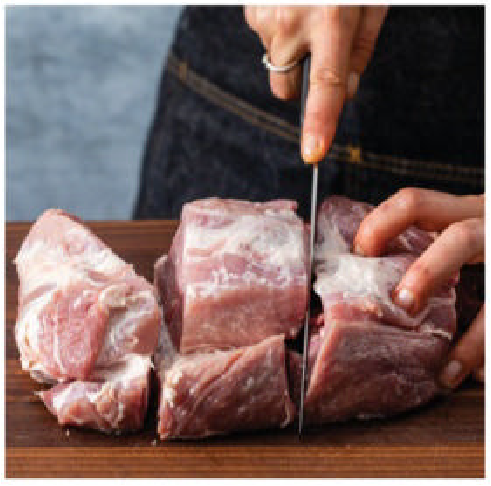


Pork Prep

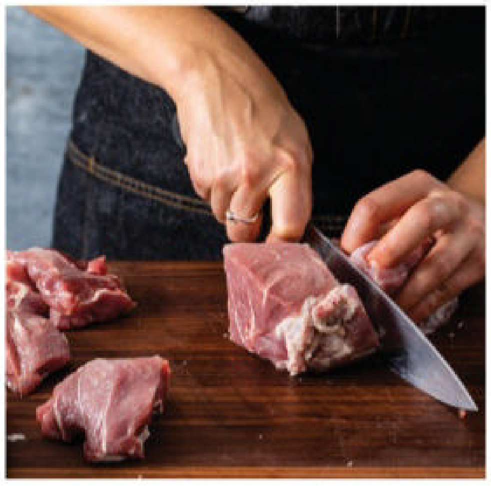
Here is how to break down a 4-pound pork butt for this recipe.



1. Trim pork butt of large pieces of fat.



2. Cut pork butt crosswise into 3 slabs.



3. Cut each slab in half crosswise.

Pickled
Radish Toast

Move over, avocado; there's a new toast in town. **by Mark Huxsoll**

WHEN SPRING produce hits farmers' markets and grocery stores, radishes are among the first vegetables to burst onto the scene, with their beautiful hues of red, pink, purple, and even black. Pungent and crisp, radishes are a force on their own. But they are also versatile and, with some culinary know-how, can be paired with complementary ingredients to delicious effect. Here, quickly pickling sliced radishes mellows their bite, making them perfect companions for a creamy, cheesy spread and toasted crusty bread.

LEMON-PICKLED RADISH TOAST WITH BASIL AND PARMESAN

Serves 4 to 6   Total Time: 30 minutes, plus 30 minutes pickling

We prefer to slice the radishes using a mandoline, but you can also use a knife. The pickling liquid might not fully cover the radishes at first; they will shrink significantly as they pickle. Be sure to drain the radishes after 30 minutes or they will become too soft. We developed this recipe using a round boule, but any rustic, crusty bread will work. Cut into four pieces each, these toasts make excellent party snacks.

1	**pound radishes, trimmed and sliced ⅛ inch thick (3½ cups)**
½	**teaspoon grated lemon zest plus 6 tablespoons juice (2 lemons), plus lemon wedges for serving**
¼	**cup sugar**
1	**teaspoon table salt**
8	**ounces cream cheese, softened**
1	**ounce Parmesan cheese, grated (½ cup), divided**
6	**tablespoons chopped fresh basil, divided**
1	**garlic clove, minced**
6	**(½-inch-thick) slices rustic boule, toasted**
	Extra-virgin olive oil for drizzling

1. Place radishes in medium bowl or large measuring cup. Bring lemon juice, ¼ cup water, sugar, and table salt to simmer in small saucepan over medium-high heat, stirring to dissolve sugar. Pour lemon juice mixture over radishes. Let radishes sit in pickling liquid for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally; drain radishes and refrigerate until ready to serve. (Pickled radishes can be refrigerated for up to 24 hours.)

2. Meanwhile, process cream cheese, ¼ cup Parmesan, ¼ cup basil, garlic, and lemon zest in food processor until smooth, about 1 minute, scraping down sides of bowl as needed. Transfer to bowl. (Cream cheese mixture can be refrigerated for up to 2 days. Let come to room temperature before using.)

3. Spread cream cheese mixture evenly over toast. Shingle radishes evenly over cream cheese mixture. Drizzle radishes with oil and sprinkle with remaining ¼ cup Parmesan and remaining 2 tablespoons basil. Sprinkle with flake sea salt and season with pepper to taste. Serve with lemon wedges.

SHOWSTOPPING VEGGIE TOASTS IN THREE EASY STEPS

QUICK-PICKLE THE RADISHES We love to cook radishes to mellow their bite and bring out their sweetness, but cooking them softens their texture significantly. To mellow their bite while keeping their crunch, we turned to pickling. Using lemon juice and sugar in the pickling liquid both brightens and lightly sweetens the radishes.

MAKE A CREAMY SPREAD Radishes are often paired with butter, but thicker cream cheese adds more body. Mixing in nutty Parmesan cheese and a small amount of minced garlic adds depth, while a little basil introduces fresh notes.

PUT IT TOGETHER Slices of crusty bread toasted to golden brown make the perfect base for the creamy spread and pickled radishes. More basil sprinkled on top adds brightness. A drizzle of extra-virgin olive oil and sprinkles of flake sea salt and pepper finish off this simple yet visually stunning treat.

Creamy Potatoes and Leeks

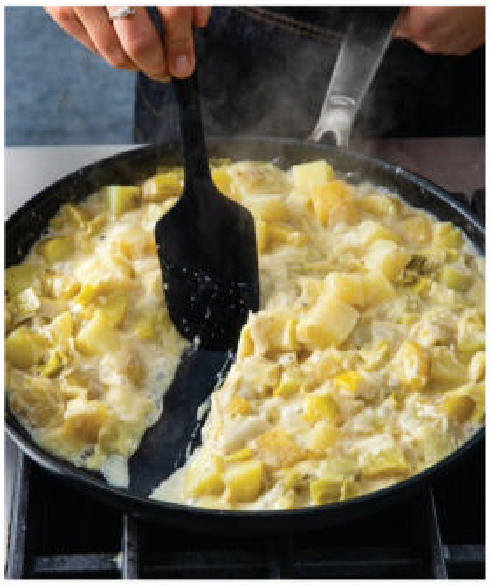
This cheesy, bread crumb–topped casserole comes together on the stovetop.

by Amanda Luchtel

Fresh thyme adds depth.

POTATOES AND LEEKS are often paired (think potato-leek soup) for the way the two components balance each other: The mellow potatoes let the leeks' subtle onion flavor shine. For a simple, hearty dish starring these two vegetables, we soften the leeks in butter and simmer the potatoes until tender, add cream and Gruyère cheese for richness, and top it all with crunchy panko bread crumbs. The resulting casserole satisfies just like a warming bowl of soup.

When Is It Done?



The cream has reduced enough once a spatula leaves a trail when dragged through the mixture. Then, it's time to add the cheese.

CREAMY POTATOES AND LEEKS

Serves 6   Total Time: 1 hour

We prefer to use leeks measuring about 1 inch in diameter for this recipe because they're more tender than larger leeks. Larger leeks will work, but discard their more fibrous outer layers.

4 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into 4 pieces, divided
½ cup panko bread crumbs
1¼ teaspoons table salt, divided
2 pounds leeks, white and light-green parts only, halved lengthwise, sliced ½ inch thick, and washed thoroughly
1½ pounds Yukon Gold potatoes, unpeeled, cut into ¾-inch pieces
1½ cups chicken broth
¼ cup dry white wine
¾ cup heavy cream
½ teaspoon pepper
2 ounces Gruyère cheese, shredded (⅔ cup)
2 teaspoons chopped fresh thyme or oregano

1. Melt 2 tablespoons butter in 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add panko and ½ teaspoon salt and cook, stirring often, until golden brown, 3 to 6 minutes. Transfer to bowl; set aside. Wipe skillet clean with paper towels.

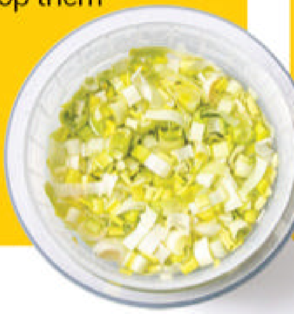
2. Melt remaining 2 tablespoons butter in now-empty skillet over medium heat. Add leeks and ¼ teaspoon salt and cook, covered, until softened, about 6 minutes, stirring halfway through cooking.

3. Stir in potatoes, broth, wine, and remaining ½ teaspoon salt and spread into even layer. Cover and bring to vigorous simmer over medium-high heat. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer, covered, until potatoes are fork-tender, 20 to 25 minutes.

4. Stir in cream and pepper and return to simmer. Continue to cook, uncovered, until spatula leaves trail when dragged through mixture, 4 to 6 minutes longer. Off heat, stir in Gruyère. Sprinkle evenly with panko mixture and thyme. Serve.

Leek Prep

Leeks grow concentrically, and each ring can trap dirt, so it's important to chop them before washing them. A salad spinner works for washing cut leeks.



KEYS TO THIS DISH

MELTED LEEKS

Cover the sliced leeks to steam and "melt" them down with butter to ensure that they are softened before adding the potatoes.

FLAVORFUL POTATOES

For maximum flavor in one skillet, simmer the potatoes in a mixture of chicken broth (for depth) and white wine (for brightness and acidity). As the potatoes cook, the liquids reduce into a base for the sauce.

CREAM AND CHEESE

Add cream to the partially cooked potatoes, allowing their starches to slightly thicken as the liquid reduces. Then stir in shredded Gruyère for richness and a hint of nuttiness.

CRUNCHY TOPPING

Toast panko bread crumbs in melted butter for a quick, crispy topping without heating the oven. Sprinkle the cooked potatoes with these crispy bits and some fresh thyme just before serving.

House Special Shrimp

(Shrimp with Garlic and Jalapeños)

Fresh, fast "California cooking" with a tether to the Teochew diaspora.

by Diep Tran

Editors' note: This story was reported and written before Royal Capital Seafood closed in October of 2022.

ROYAL CAPITAL Seafood Restaurant, located in the Little Saigon district of Garden Grove, California, is a chandelier-studded Teochew-style palace of oceanic delights. Walk through its doors on any weekend and you'll see servers navigating the congested dining room, carrying platters of lobster, crab, fish, and shrimp that were just minutes ago swimming in one of the restaurant's many holding tanks.

Of the menu's more than 200 items, the standouts are the house special seafood dishes. What they all have in common is their preparation: a dredging in potato starch before being flash-fried and tossed in an aromatic mixture of fish sauce, jalapeños, black pepper, garlic, scallions, and butter.

> ***. . . the house specials also provide a history lesson in Teochew diasporic cooking.***

These crispy fried shrimp are flavored with fish sauce, lime juice, sugar, and lots of black pepper.

In addition to being spectacular and worthy of a long drive, the house specials also provide a history lesson in Teochew diasporic cooking. With roots in Guangdong, the Teochew diaspora spans the world, with significant communities in Vietnam and Cambodia. The house specials' frying method and the mixture of fish sauce, jalapeños, black pepper, garlic, and scallions in butter sauce reflect this convergence of Teochew, Khmer, and Vietnamese foodways. And there's a nod to the community's more recent history of migration to California: the liberal use of jalapeños, a Golden State staple, where you might otherwise expect to find the more commonly used Thai chile of Southeast Asia.

To me, this kind of cooking, the kind that rejects confinement, that confounds efforts to be classified as one cuisine or another, is what makes the Royal Capital house specials so special—they represent the elasticity, adaptability, and fluidity of cuisines as populations cross borders that are both physical and psychological. For this precise reason, it's sometimes hard to identify a Teochew-style restaurant. They may be advertised as Chinese, Vietnamese Chinese, or Hong Kong–style restaurants, but if you hear any combination of Vietnamese, Chinese, and Khmer being spoken in the dining room, you're most likely in the right place.

Royal Capital wasn't the creator of this style of preparing seafood—as Diana Zheng notes in *Jia! The Food of Swatow and the Teochew Diaspora* (2018). That honor belongs to Ly Hua of Tan Cang Newport Seafood Restaurant. Neither is Royal Capital the only place to find these house specials, as there are a number of Teochew-style banquet halls throughout Little Saigon that prepare seafood in a similar fashion. But I have a soft spot for Royal Capital, which was where I first encountered this style of cooking. The place has been feeding diners for more than two decades. Royal Capital might look a little long in the tooth and perhaps her once palatial decor needs an update, but she's still serving up my favorite versions of these dishes.

Diep Tran is a coauthor of *The Red Boat Fish Sauce Cookbook: Beloved Recipes from the Family Behind the Purest Fish Sauce* (2021) and the founder of the Banh Chung Collective. She is the former chef/owner of Good Girl Dinette in Los Angeles.

Key Steps

If you can't get to Little Saigon, it's easy to re-create house special shrimp at home.

BRINE

Brine the shrimp in a salt and baking soda solution for 20 minutes to keep them tender and juicy. (Our science editor explains that the baking soda raises the pH of the shellfish's muscle, which alters the electric charge of its protein. As a result, the muscle fibers stay slightly apart from each other instead of clenching together, and the moisture between the fibers stays put.)

TOSS

Quickly toss the brined shrimp in potato starch twice, making sure the starch gets into all the shrimp's nooks and crannies, and then gently shake off any excess (too much starch will produce a sandy texture).

FRY

Fry the shrimp in plenty of hot oil until crisp, and toss them with the sauce.

Once you master this style of cooking seafood, try applying this technique to shell-on lobster or Dungeness crab.

● SHRIMP WITH GARLIC AND JALAPEÑO BUTTER

Serves 4

Total Time: 1 hour

We prefer untreated shrimp—those not treated with sodium or additives such as sodium tripolyphosphate (STPP). Most frozen E-Z peel shrimp have been treated (the ingredient list should tell you). Serve with rice and sliced cucumber.

¼	**cup kosher salt for brining**
1	**tablespoon baking soda for brining**
2	**pounds jumbo shrimp (16 to 20 per pound), peeled and deveined**
1	**tablespoon fish sauce**
1	**tablespoon lime juice**
1	**tablespoon sugar**
1½	**teaspoons pepper**
⅔	**cup potato starch, divided**
1	**quart peanut or vegetable oil for frying**
3	**tablespoons unsalted butter**
4	**scallions, white parts sliced thin, green parts cut into ¾-inch pieces**
3	**tablespoons minced garlic**
2	**jalapeños, stemmed, seeded, and cut into ¼-inch pieces**

1. Combine 2 quarts cold water, ¼ cup salt, and baking soda in large bowl and whisk until salt is dissolved. Add shrimp and let soak for 20 minutes. Combine fish sauce, lime juice, sugar, and pepper in small bowl; set aside.

2. Transfer shrimp to colander and rinse well with cold water. Pat shrimp dry with paper towels and transfer to large mixing bowl. Sprinkle ⅓ cup potato starch over shrimp and toss to coat. Add remaining ⅓ cup potato starch and toss until shrimp are well coated. Transfer shrimp to rimmed baking sheet, shaking off any excess starch.

3. Line large mixing bowl with paper towels. Add oil to 12-inch skillet until it measures about ¾ inch deep. Heat oil over medium-high heat to 400 degrees. Add half of shrimp to skillet, spacing them so they don't touch. Fry until lightly golden and crisp, 60 to 90 seconds per side.

4. Using spider skimmer or slotted spoon, transfer fried shrimp to prepared bowl. (Exterior of shrimp should be crisp when tapped. If not, return shrimp to oil and fry for another 15 seconds on both sides.) Repeat with remaining shrimp.

5. Melt butter in small saucepan over medium heat. Add scallion whites and garlic and cook until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add jalapeños and fish sauce mixture and cook, stirring often, until sugar is melted and sauce just comes to boil, about 30 seconds.

6. Remove paper towels from bowl with shrimp. Pour sauce over shrimp and sprinkle with scallion greens. Toss until shrimp are evenly coated in sauce. Transfer to serving platter. Serve.

Bob's Red Mill
PREMIUM QUALITY
POTATO STARCH
UNMODIFIED

Spud Starch

Potato starch is made by grinding raw potatoes, then purifying and dehydrating the milky liquid that comes out. Generally, you can use potato starch similarly to cornstarch, but because it has larger granules, it is a stronger thickener; use 2 teaspoons of potato starch for every tablespoon of cornstarch. Potato starch thickens faster than cornstarch and produces a slightly different texture in the liquids it is used to thicken.

If you don't have a frying thermometer, just stick a wooden chopstick into the oil—if it bubbles vigorously, then the oil is hot enough. ***—D.T.***

Frito Pie

Looking for a fun, satisfying chili recipe? It's in the bag.

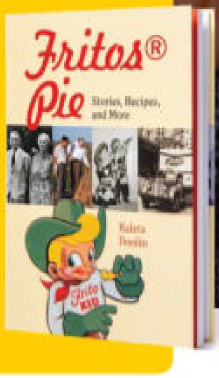
by Mark Huxsoll

Known as a "walking taco" to some, Frito (or Fritos) pie is an American icon. It's not a pie or a taco at all but rather a simple, rich beef chili spooned over salty, crunchy Fritos right in the bag, garnished with shredded cheddar and diced white onion. It's the perfect snack for an outdoor party, walking around the state fair, or cheering on your local team under the Friday night lights. Frito pie is best eaten with friends who appreciate simple pleasures—it's a recipe for good times.

The roots of Frito pie run deep in the American South. Origin stories and recipes can vary and are often hotly contested. How does anyone know what to believe? We decided to turn to the source—or, rather, to the source's offspring. Kaleta Doolin is the daughter of Fritos founder C.E. Doolin. In her book *Fritos Pie: Stories, Recipes, and More* (2011), she says the dish was the creation of the marketing department and corporate kitchen. Its rise in popularity came as a result of the creation of Frito-Lay in 1961 (see "The American Table"). The original packages for Fritos were paper bags, but after

The American Table

According to the book *Fritos Pie: Stories, Recipes, and More* (2011) by Kaleta Doolin, the daughter of Fritos founder C.E. Doolin, her father purchased the recipe for fried corn chips in 1932 (along with an extruding press for making them, plus 19 customer accounts) from a gentleman who ran a gas station in San Antonio, Texas. The grand sum was $100. According to Forbes, Frito-Lay was recently valued at $16.3 billion and was named the 39th most valuable brand in the world—not a bad return on investment. That $100 transaction was the start of the Fritos company. The company went on to merge with Lays to become Frito-Lay in 1961; in 1965 it became a subsidiary of PepsiCo.

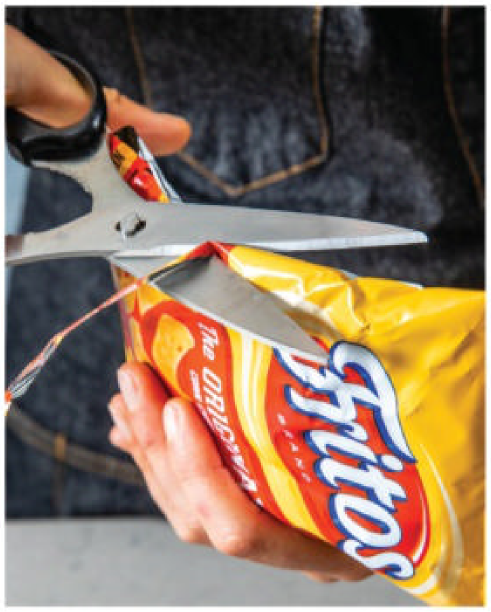


the merger, the company switched to moisture-resistant cellophane bags, and Frito-Lay began printing instructions for the chili directly on the package. The recipe read: “Heat can of chili, pour into bag of Fritos, and sprinkle with grated cheese and chopped onions.” The company sold its own canned chili for the purpose of making Frito pie, and many devotees claim to this day that canned chili is an integral ingredient.

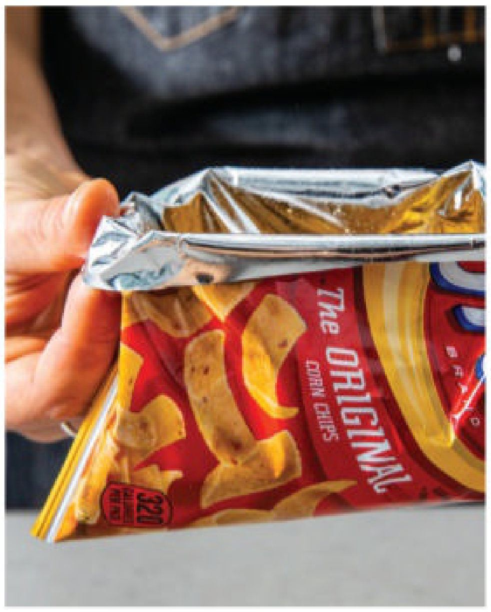
We tried the dish with canned chili and were underwhelmed; it was fine and it was fun, but we knew we could do better. The chili recipe here is inspired by the one in Kaleta Doolin’s book. The trick to success was finding the intersection of convenience and wholesome home cooking. Ground beef is the star, and we keep the seasoning simple with chili powder, ground cumin, oregano, and some canned chipotle in adobo for heat and depth. A little cornmeal adds a sweetness that mimics that of canned chili and also works as a thickener.

The chili is spooned right into 2-ounce bags of original Fritos—cut open along the long edge and folded back in cuffs—for an authentic and nostalgic feeling. Serve this for your next tailgate or summer barbecue, your kids’ next sleepover or team dinner, or a late-night snack.

From Bag to Bowl



1. Using scissors, cut long side of each Fritos bag from end to end.



2. Gently fold back top edge of each bag to form sturdy cuff.

● FRITO PIE

Serves 6 to 12 Total time: 1¾ hours

If you can’t find 85 percent lean ground beef, you can use 80 percent. We prefer the flavor of Pacifico or other Mexican lagers in this chili, but if they are unavailable, Budweiser or another mild lager will work just fine. Do not use bolder beers, which can make the chili too bitter. For a milder chili, use the smaller quantity of chipotle. We developed this recipe with original flavor Fritos corn chips. You can assemble and eat the Frito pie right out of the bag, or you can portion Fritos (2 to 4 ounces per serving) and chili (½ cup to 1 cup per serving) into individual serving bowls. This recipe will serve six as a meal or 12 as a snack or as part of a larger spread.

2	**tablespoons vegetable oil**
1½	**pounds 85 percent lean ground beef**
2	**teaspoons table salt**
2	**onions, chopped fine (2 cups), divided**
6	**garlic cloves, minced**
2	**tablespoons cornmeal**
2	**tablespoons chili powder**
2	**teaspoons pepper**
1½	**teaspoons ground cumin**
1	**teaspoon dried oregano**
1	**(28-ounce) can crushed tomatoes**
1½	**cups mild lager**
1–2	**tablespoons minced canned chipotle chile in adobo sauce**
12	**(2-ounce) bags Fritos corn chips**
12	**ounces mild yellow cheddar cheese, shredded (3 cups)**

1. Heat oil in Dutch oven over medium-high heat until just smoking. Add beef and salt and cook, using wooden spoon to break meat into ¼-inch pieces, until beef is browned and fond begins to form on bottom of pot, 12 to 14 minutes.

2. Reduce heat to medium. Add 1 cup onions and cook, stirring occasionally, until onions are softened and lightly browned, about 5 minutes. Stir in garlic, cornmeal, chili powder, pepper, cumin, and oregano and cook until fragrant, about 1 minute.

3. Stir in tomatoes, beer, and chipotle, scraping up any browned bits. Bring to simmer, reduce heat to low, and cook, stirring occasionally, until thickened, about 1 hour, adjusting heat as needed to maintain gentle simmer.

4. Using scissors, cut long sides of Fritos bags from end to end. Gently fold back top edge of each bag to form cuff. Scoop about ½ cup chili into each Fritos bag. Top chili with cheddar and remaining 1 cup onions. Serve.

Adana-Style **Kebabs**

These juicy, fragrant, and delicious Turkish-style spiced lamb skewers deserve more attention.

by Matthew Fairman

IT WAS LOVE at first bite. Since the first time I tried Adana kebabs in a Turkish restaurant near my home in New Orleans, I've been a little obsessed. The long, flat kebabs of red pepper–infused ground lamb were served atop a flatbread glistening with the tasty drippings. The meat was tender, juicy, and rich—garlicky and smoky with a captivating, balanced heat.

I was smitten and had to learn more. Since then, I've done hours and hours of research and eaten versions at Turkish restaurants from New Orleans to Boston to Munich, Germany, where thousands of kebab shops line the streets. There, I had one particularly exceptional version at an incredible restaurant named for the Turkish city of Adana, where the kebabs originate and where they are a popular specialty.

I watched the chef pull out an arm's-length sword of a skewer (called a shish) that was sheathed with a perfectly uniform layer of minced lamb. He gave the kebab a few turns over the hot mangal (a shallow box filled with glowing coals), and when the lamb began to sizzle and brown, he pulled it from the fire and pressed it between sheets of lavash to season and warm the flatbread with the juices from the meat and marinade. Served with garlicky yogurt and a salad of onion, parsley, and sumac, it was the most delicious thing I ate in Germany.

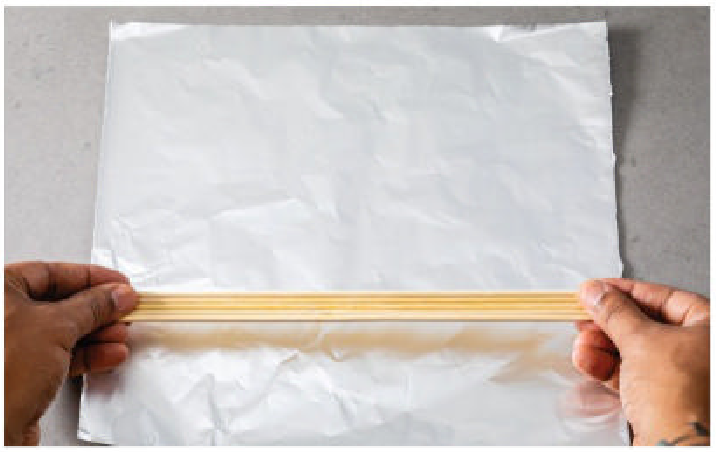
Since then I've been making Adana kebabs too, going through iteration after iteration to create a kebab that does justice to the best versions I've tasted (and others I've read about). The recipe here is necessarily a compromise but a really delicious one. In Adana the recipe is patented and strictly defined. Among other restrictions, the designation of origin specifies that a precise percentage of male lamb meat and tail fat must be minced by hand with a zirh (a large, crescent-shaped knife).

For practicality's sake, our recipe starts with ground lamb (with the highest fat percentage you can find), into which we mix a blend of aromatics and spices: chopped onion, garlic, biber salçası (Turkish pepper paste), cumin, paprika, sumac, and cayenne pepper. The onion not only adds pungency and bite, but its moisture content helps keep the kebabs juicy. The pepper paste, which adds an irreplaceable salty-sweet brightness, and sumac, which lends a unique pleasant sourness, are worth seeking out, either online or at your local Middle Eastern grocery.

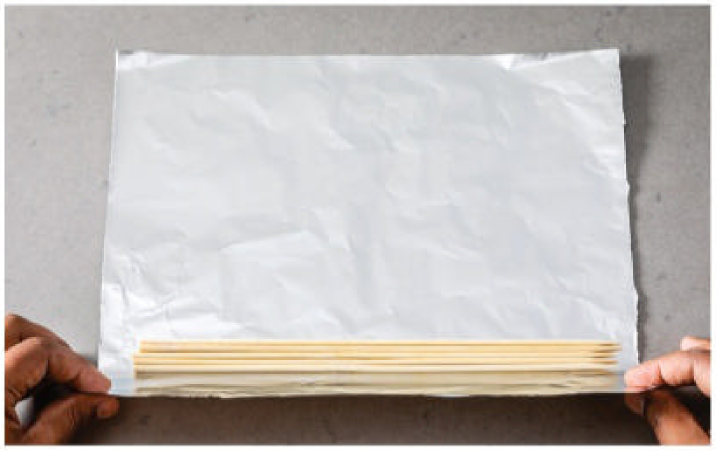
To correctly shape the ground lamb mixture for our Adana kebabs, we form makeshift shishes by wrapping aluminum foil around planks made from five wooden skewers. Finally, after refrigerating the lamb skewers to firm them up, we give them a quick stint over a very hot, well-oiled grill. A 5-minute rest atop lavash lets their juices seep into the flatbreads and gives you time to toss together the vibrant, super-fresh salad. I hope you'll try them for yourself to see the deliciousness that's had me so infatuated over these past months.

Rich, deeply spiced lamb (or beef) is grilled and served atop lavash with a fresh salad.

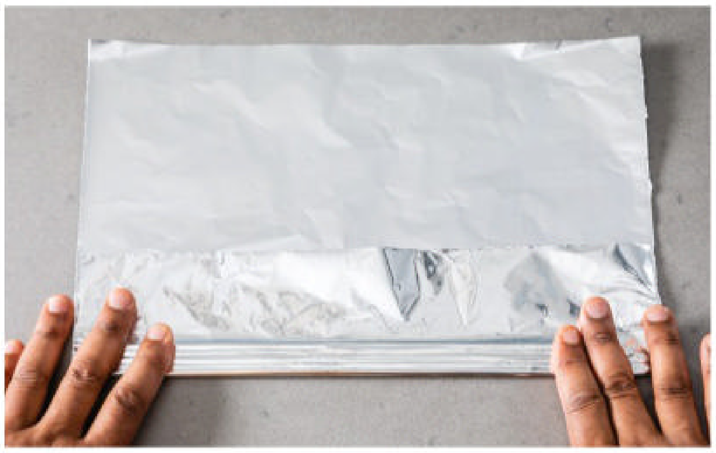
How to Make a Shish from Foil and Bamboo Skewers



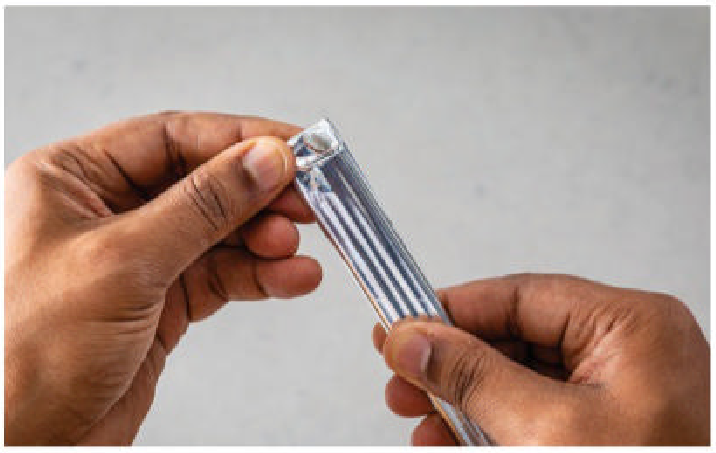
1. Place foil sheet on counter and place 5 bamboo skewers one-third of way up sheet.



2. Fold bottom third of foil up and press down to secure over skewers.



3. Fold skewers over themselves, pressing foil down with each fold.



4. Fold ends of foil down to form single wide, flat skewer.

GRILLED ADANA-STYLE KEBABS

Serves 4 to 6 *Total Time: 1¾ hours, plus 1 hour chilling*

You will need thirty 12-inch bamboo skewers for this recipe. Jarred biber salçası (Turkish red pepper paste) can be found in Middle Eastern grocery stores or online. Be sure to use the mild variety; if it's unavailable, you can substitute 3 tablespoons of tomato paste and increase the amount of paprika to 4 teaspoons. You can substitute 80 percent lean ground beef for the lamb, if desired. Pita can be substituted for the lavash. If you're using pita or smaller lavashes, you may want to use more than three. Serve with yogurt or tzatziki sauce, if desired.

KEBABS

30 (12-inch) bamboo skewers
1 cup coarsely chopped onion
4 garlic cloves, chopped
3 tablespoons mild biber salçası
2 teaspoons kosher salt
2 teaspoons paprika
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1 teaspoon ground sumac
1 teaspoon pepper
½ teaspoon cayenne pepper
1½ pounds ground lamb
3 large rectangular lavashes, halved crosswise

SALAD

3 plum tomatoes, cored and chopped
2 small red onions, thinly sliced (2 cups)
1 cup chopped fresh parsley
¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
¼ cup lemon juice (2 lemons)
2 tablespoons ground sumac
1½ teaspoons kosher salt

1. FOR THE KEBABS: Place 12 by 13-inch-long sheet of aluminum foil on counter with long side parallel to edge of counter. Place 5 skewers together (parallel to edge of counter) about one-third of way up sheet of foil. Fold bottom third of foil up over skewers and press foil down firmly to hold skewers in place. Fold skewers up and over themselves to wrap tightly in foil, pressing foil down firmly with each fold until you have a single 1-inch wide, flat skewer. Fold ends of foil over top and bottom of skewer and pinch firmly to seal. Repeat with remaining bamboo skewers and 5 additional pieces of foil to create 6 wide skewers; set aside.

2. Pulse onion and garlic in food processor until very finely chopped but not pureed, 15 to 20 pulses, scraping down sides of bowl as needed. Transfer to large bowl. Stir in biber salçası, salt, paprika, cumin, sumac, pepper, and cayenne. Add lamb to bowl with onion mixture and knead with your hands until thoroughly combined, about 1 minute.

3. With your moistened hands, divide lamb mixture into 6 equal balls (about 5 ounces each). Working with 1 ball and 1 skewer at a time, press ball of lamb around middle of skewer. Squeeze lamb mixture to cover skewer and press into flat, 9-inch long kebab, moistening your hands periodically if mixture begins to stick. Use your thumb and forefinger to press ridges evenly across entire length of kebab. (If lamb mixture becomes too warm to work with easily and shape onto skewers, transfer to freezer for 15 to 30 minutes to firm it up.) Transfer kebabs to lightly greased baking sheet. Cover kebabs with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 1 hour or up to 24 hours.

4A. FOR A CHARCOAL GRILL: Open bottom vent completely. Light large chimney starter mounded with charcoal briquettes (7 quarts). When top coals are partially covered with ash, pour evenly over grill. Set cooking grate in place, cover, and open lid vent completely. Heat grill until hot, about 5 minutes.

4B. FOR A GAS GRILL: Turn all burners to high; cover; and heat grill until hot, about 15 minutes. Leave all burners on high.

5. Clean cooking grate, then repeatedly brush grate with well-oiled paper towels until grate is black and glossy, 5 to 10 times. Cover grill and heat about 5 minutes longer. Uncover and wipe grate twice more with well-oiled paper towels.

6. Arrange lavash on large serving platter. Place kebabs on grill at 45-degree angle to grate. Cook, covered, until well browned and meat easily releases from grill, 3 to 4 minutes per side. (If kebabs stick to grill grates, use thin metal spatula to gently loosen before flipping with tongs). Top lavash with kebabs, tent with foil, and let rest for 5 minutes.

7. FOR THE SALAD: Meanwhile, toss all ingredients together in large bowl.

8. To remove kebabs from skewers, pinch piece of lavash around base of kebab and pull out skewer. Serve kebabs with salad and lavash.

Ingredient Spotlight

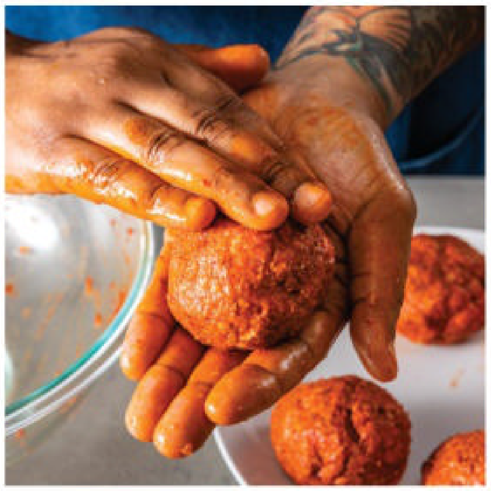
BIBER SALÇASI

Literally translated as "pepper paste," biber salçası is a concentrated paste made from salted, ground sweet (in the case of tatli biber salçası) or hot (in the case of aci biber salçası) red peppers. You can use it as you would tomato paste in other dishes.

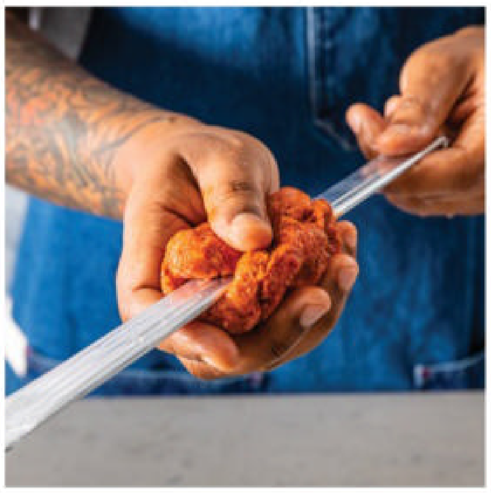
SUMAC

Popular in the Middle East, sumac is the dried, ground berry of a shrub in the cashew family (don't confuse it with poisonous white sumac). It has a bracingly tart flavor with notes of citrus. Sumac is excellent sprinkled on cooked meats and vegetables or over any food where you'd also use lemon.

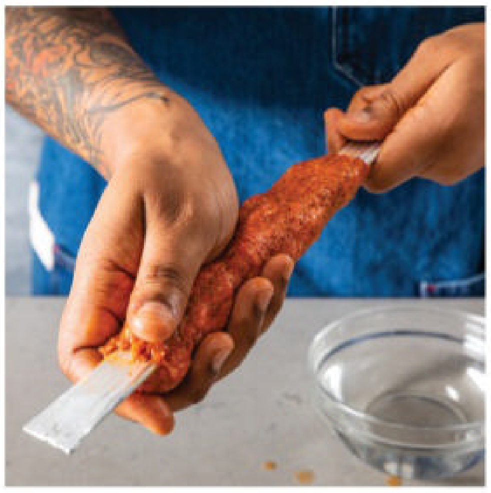
Press Meat onto Skewers



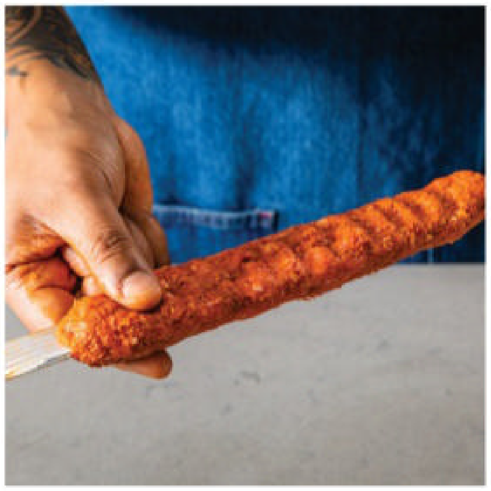
1. Divide meat mixture into 6 equal balls.



2. Press ball of meat around middle of skewer.



3. Squeeze meat mixture to cover skewer in even layer.



4. Use your thumb and forefinger to press ridges across meat mixture.

Honey-Soy Steak Tips with Roasted Green Beans

DINNER TONIGHT / SERVES 4 / 45 MINUTES

Grilled Chicken Fajitas with Cilantro-Lime Sour Cream

DINNER TONIGHT / SERVES 4 / 1 HOUR

Italian Hoagie Salad

DINNER TONIGHT / SERVES 4 / 40 MINUTES

Pork Tenderloin with Blueberry-Ginger Chutney

DINNER TONIGHT / SERVES 4 / 45 MINUTES

Grilled Chicken Fajitas with Cilantro-Lime Sour Cream

We developed this recipe with Morton & Bassett Chili Powder. Serve with lime wedges.

3 tablespoons vegetable oil, divided
2½ teaspoons chili powder
1½ teaspoons plus ⅛ teaspoon table salt, divided
1½ teaspoons ground cumin
1 teaspoon grated lime zest, plus 2 tablespoons lime juice, divided
3 (6- to 8-ounce) boneless, skinless chicken breasts, trimmed
1 red onion, sliced into ½-inch-thick rounds
2 yellow, red, orange, or green bell peppers, quartered, stemmed, and seeded
¾ cup sour cream
3 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro
8–12 (6-inch) flour tortillas

1. Combine 1½ tablespoons oil, chili powder, ¾ teaspoon salt, cumin, and 1½ tablespoons lime juice in large bowl. Pat chicken dry with paper towels. Add chicken to marinade and toss to coat. Push toothpick horizontally through each onion round. Brush onion and bell peppers with remaining 1½ tablespoons oil and sprinkle with ¾ teaspoon salt. Combine sour cream, cilantro, lime zest, and remaining 1½ teaspoons lime juice and ⅛ teaspoon salt in bowl.

2. Grill chicken, onion, and bell peppers over hot fire (covered if using gas) until chicken registers 160 degrees and vegetables are tender and lightly charred, 5 to 7 minutes per side. Transfer chicken and vegetables to cutting board. Grill tortillas until warmed, about 10 seconds per side. Wrap in foil to keep warm.

3. Slice chicken crosswise into ¼-inch-thick pieces and peppers into thin strips. Remove toothpicks from onion and cut rounds in half. Serve.

Honey-Soy Steak Tips with Roasted Green Beans

Sirloin steak tips are often sold as flap meat. Serve with rice.

1 pound green beans, trimmed
3 tablespoons vegetable oil, divided
1 teaspoon table salt, divided
¾ teaspoon pepper, divided
¼ cup honey
3 tablespoons soy sauce
3 garlic cloves, minced
1 teaspoon cornstarch
¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes
2 pounds sirloin steak tips, trimmed and cut into 2-inch chunks
3 scallions, sliced thin on bias

1. Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 450 degrees. Toss green beans, 1 tablespoon oil, ¼ teaspoon salt, and ¼ teaspoon pepper together on rimmed baking sheet. Roast until tender, about 15 minutes.

2. Meanwhile, whisk honey, soy sauce, garlic, cornstarch, and pepper flakes in bowl until cornstarch is fully dissolved. Sprinkle steak tips with remaining ¾ teaspoon salt and ½ teaspoon pepper. Heat remaining 2 tablespoons oil in 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium-high heat until just smoking. Add steak tips and cook until browned on all sides and meat registers 120 to 125 degrees (for medium-rare), about 7 minutes. Transfer steak tips to plate.

3. Add honey mixture to fat remaining in skillet and cook over medium-high heat until mixture is thickened and glossy, about 1 minute. Off heat, return steak tips and any accumulated juices to skillet and toss to coat. Serve, sprinkled with scallions.

Pork Tenderloin with Blueberry-Ginger Chutney

The recipe will make extra chutney; use it on sandwiches or serve with cheese.

15 ounces (3 cups) blueberries, divided
⅓ cup packed brown sugar
¼ cup cider vinegar
1 tablespoon grated fresh ginger
1¾ teaspoons table salt, divided
1¼ teaspoons pepper, divided
2 (1-pound) pork tenderloins, trimmed
3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided
5 ounces (5 cups) mesclun
4 ounces (1 cup) goat cheese, crumbled
½ cup sliced almonds, toasted

1. Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 325 degrees. Combine 2 cups blueberries and sugar in large saucepan. Mash with potato masher, then bring to boil over medium-high heat. Stir in vinegar, ginger, ½ teaspoon salt, and ½ teaspoon pepper. Reduce heat to medium and simmer until thickened, about 10 minutes. Set aside to cool.

2. Meanwhile, pat pork dry with paper towels and sprinkle all over with 1 teaspoon salt and ½ teaspoon pepper. Heat 1 tablespoon oil in 12-inch ovensafe nonstick skillet over medium-high heat until just smoking. Add pork and cook until well browned on all sides, 6 to 8 minutes. Transfer skillet to oven and continue to cook until meat registers 135 degrees, 6 to 12 minutes longer.

3. Transfer pork to cutting board and let rest for 10 minutes. Whisk 2 tablespoons chutney and remaining 2 tablespoons oil, ¼ teaspoon salt, and ¼ teaspoon pepper together in large bowl. Add mesclun, goat cheese, almonds, and remaining 1 cup blueberries and toss to combine. Slice pork. Serve.

Italian Hoagie Salad

We like to top this salad with torn fresh basil leaves and serve it with cantaloupe wedges on the side.

8 ounces hoagie or sub rolls, preferably with sesame seeds, cut into ¾-inch pieces
7 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided
½ teaspoon table salt, divided
1 cup jarred cherry peppers, stemmed, plus 2 tablespoons brine
2 tablespoons mayonnaise
½ teaspoon dried oregano
3 romaine lettuce hearts (18 ounces), sliced ¼ inch thick
12 ounces cherry or grape tomatoes, halved
6 ounces sliced mixed Italian deli meats (Genoa salami, capicola, mortadella, and pepperoni), cut into ¼-inch ribbons
4 ounces sliced provolone cheese, cut into ¼-inch ribbons
½ cup thinly sliced red onion, rinsed

1. Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 475 degrees. Toss roll pieces, 3 tablespoons oil, and ¼ teaspoon salt together on rimmed baking sheet. Bake, stirring occasionally, until golden brown, 6 to 8 minutes.

2. Pulse cherry peppers in food processor until finely chopped, 8 to 10 pulses. Add cherry pepper brine, mayonnaise, oregano, and remaining ¼ cup oil and ¼ teaspoon salt and process until mostly smooth, about 20 seconds.

3. Transfer dressing to large bowl. Add lettuce, tomatoes, deli meats, provolone, onion, and croutons and toss to combine. Serve.

Mussels and Linguine with 'Nduja Cream Sauce

DINNER TONIGHT / SERVES 4 / 1 HOUR

Roasted Chicken Thighs with Asparagus, Arugula, and Walnut Salad

DINNER TONIGHT / SERVES 4 / 50 MINUTES

Coriander Salmon with Beets, Oranges, and Avocados

DINNER TONIGHT / SERVES 4 / 35 MINUTES

Curried Sweet Potato Soup with Spiced Pepitas

DINNER TONIGHT / SERVES 4 / 40 MINUTES

Roasted Chicken Thighs with Asparagus, Arugula, and Walnut Salad

For easier slicing, select large asparagus spears, about ½ inch thick.

8	**(5- to 7-ounce) bone-in chicken thighs, trimmed**
3½	**teaspoons kosher salt, divided**
1¼	**teaspoons pepper, divided**
1	**tablespoon grated lemon zest plus 3 tablespoons juice**
¾	**cup walnuts, toasted and chopped, divided**
3	**tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil**
1	**small shallot, chopped**
1	**tablespoon water**
1	**teaspoon honey**
1	**pound thick asparagus, trimmed and sliced thin on long bias**
5	**ounces (5 cups) baby arugula**

1. Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 450 degrees. Pat chicken dry with paper towels. Sprinkle skin side of chicken with 1 teaspoon salt and ½ teaspoon pepper. Place chicken skin side down in 12-inch nonstick skillet and sprinkle flesh side with 1 teaspoon salt, ½ teaspoon pepper, and lemon zest.

2. Cook chicken over medium-high heat until skin is golden brown, about 10 minutes. Flip chicken and continue to cook 3 minutes longer. Transfer chicken skin side up to rimmed baking sheet and roast until chicken registers 175 degrees, about 15 minutes.

3. Meanwhile, process lemon juice, ½ cup walnuts, oil, shallot, water, honey, and remaining 1½ teaspoons salt and ¼ teaspoon pepper in food processor until mostly smooth, about 30 seconds. Transfer to large bowl. Add asparagus, arugula, and remaining ¼ cup walnuts and toss to combine. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve.

Mussels and Linguine with 'Nduja Cream Sauce

You can find 'nduja, a spicy spreadable sausage, in most Italian markets or online.

1	**pound linguine**
	Table salt for cooking pasta
2	**tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided**
2	**teaspoons fennel seeds**
2	**shallots, sliced thin**
4	**garlic cloves, sliced thin**
2	**pounds mussels, scrubbed and debearded**
½	**cup white wine**
1	**cup heavy cream**
4	**ounces 'nduja sausage, casing removed**
¾	**cup shredded fresh basil leaves**

1. Bring 4 quarts water to boil in large pot. Add pasta and 1 tablespoon salt and cook until al dente. Reserve ¾ cup cooking water and drain pasta in colander. Toss pasta with 1 tablespoon olive oil and let sit in colander while cooking mussels.

2. Cook fennel seeds and remaining 1 tablespoon olive oil in now-empty pot over medium heat until seeds are sizzling and fragrant, about 1 minute. Add shallots and garlic and cook until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add mussels and wine, increase heat to high, and cook, covered, until mussels have opened, 3 to 5 minutes. Using slotted spoon, transfer mussels to large bowl; discard any that haven't opened.

3. Add cream and 'nduja to broth remaining in pot and bring to boil, breaking up 'nduja to dissolve in cream. Add pasta back to pot and stir until sauce thickens, about 1 minute. Adjust consistency with reserved cooking water as needed. Add basil and mussels to pasta and toss to combine. Season with salt to taste. Serve.

Curried Sweet Potato Soup with Spiced Pepitas

Top with chopped fresh cilantro, if desired.

¼	**cup extra-virgin olive oil, divided**
3½	**teaspoons curry powder, divided**
3	**garlic cloves, minced, divided**
1	**tablespoon grated fresh ginger, divided**
4½	**cups water**
2	**pounds sweet potatoes, peeled, halved lengthwise, and sliced ¼ inch thick**
1	**(14-ounce) can coconut milk**
½	**cup white miso**
1	**teaspoon table salt, divided**
⅓	**cup raw pepitas**
⅛	**teaspoon cayenne pepper**

1. Heat 2 tablespoons oil in large saucepan over medium heat until shimmering. Add 1 tablespoon curry powder, 2 garlic cloves, and 2 teaspoons ginger and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add water, sweet potatoes, coconut milk, miso, and ¾ teaspoon salt and bring to simmer over high heat. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer until potatoes are very tender, about 15 minutes.

2. Meanwhile, cook pepitas, cayenne, and remaining 2 tablespoons oil, ½ teaspoon curry powder, and ¼ teaspoon salt in 8-inch skillet over medium heat until pepitas are golden, 3 to 5 minutes. Stir in remaining garlic and ginger and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Set aside.

3. Using immersion blender, blend soup until smooth, about 2 minutes. Serve soup drizzled with spiced oil and pepitas.

Coriander Salmon with Beets, Oranges, and Avocados

We like to use vacuum-packed cooked beets, which are available in the produce section of many grocery stores. You can also use drained canned beets or leftover roasted beets.

2	**oranges**
1¾	**teaspoons table salt, divided**
1	**teaspoon ground coriander**
¾	**teaspoon pepper, divided**
4	**(6- to 8-ounce) skin-on salmon fillets, 1 to 1½ inches thick**
¼	**cup extra-virgin olive oil, divided**
1	**pound cooked beets, cut into ½-inch pieces**
2	**avocados, halved, pitted, and cut into ½-inch pieces**
1	**shallot, minced**
1	**tablespoon cider vinegar**

1. Grate 1 teaspoon zest from 1 orange. Combine zest with ¾ teaspoon salt, coriander, and ½ teaspoon pepper in bowl, rubbing between your fingers to release oils from zest. Rub spice mixture over salmon flesh.

2. Heat 1 tablespoon oil in 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium-high heat until just smoking. Add salmon, skin side up, and cook until well browned, about 6 minutes. Flip and continue to cook until salmon registers 125 degrees (for medium-rare), about 6 minutes longer. Transfer to platter.

3. Cut away peel and pith from oranges and cut into ½-inch pieces. Gently toss oranges and any released juices, beets, avocados, shallot, vinegar, and remaining 3 tablespoons oil, 1 teaspoon salt, and ¼ teaspoon pepper together in bowl. Serve.

King Trumpet Mushrooms

Your new favorite mushroom takes center stage in this delightfully easy recipe.

by Nicole Konstantinakos

COMMONLY FOUND IN Asian grocery stores and increasingly in larger supermarkets, king trumpet mushrooms (*Pleurotus eryngii*), also known as king oyster mushrooms, deserve a closer look. They resemble porcini mushrooms, with their dark brown caps and thick, stumpy stems. But while expensive porcini are prized for their intense taste and aroma, relatively economical king trumpets are milder, with satisfying earthy, nutty flavors that take well to sauces and accompaniments. As for their texture, well-cooked king trumpet mushrooms are very tender with just a hint of chew and meatiness.

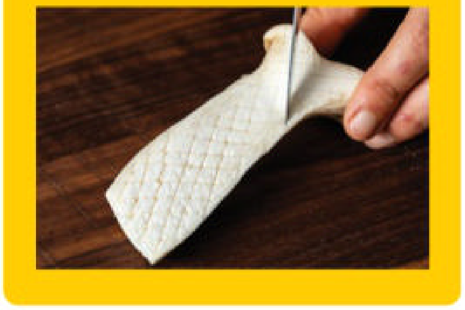
Our goal was to identify a simple cooking method that would make these soft-spoken beauties shine. We started by taking a cue from Mediterranean cuisines that poach wild mushrooms in generous baths of extra-virgin olive oil (think confit). The results were delightful, but we wanted to use less oil. So we tried roasting them in a hot oven. Although we loved the crispy edges, the mushrooms were tough and chewy.

Happily, after several days of testing, we were able to find a hybrid cooking method that gave us mushrooms with tender interiors and crisp exteriors. Before cooking, halve the king trumpets lengthwise and crosshatch the cut sides and then salt them to season and draw out moisture. In a nonstick skillet, cook the mushrooms over low heat in a shallow puddle of olive oil perfumed by garlic and rosemary, covered, until very tender—call it a steam-poach. Raise the heat and sizzle the mushrooms on their cut sides until they take on a deep golden hue and a flavorful browned crust. Use the softened garlic and oil from the skillet, plus some parsley, smoked paprika, and sherry vinegar, to make a simple warm vinaigrette.

Enjoy these stunners alongside steak, chicken, or fish, or let them shine as a satisfying main element of a vegetarian meal. Serve them on crostini with some piquant cheese as an appetizer, add chopped leftover mushrooms to omelets or scrambles, or use them to top risotto or polenta.

Crosshatching 101

Cutting a shallow grid pattern, or crosshatch, into the surface of something looks cool, but there's more to it; the cuts increase the surface area for seasoning and create a textured exterior that takes well to browning and crisping. Use a sharp paring knife to make quick, decisive strokes in each direction.



● KING TRUMPET MUSHROOMS WITH SMOKED PAPRIKA VINAIGRETTE

Serves 4 Total Time: 1 hour

Look for king trumpet mushrooms, also known as king oyster mushrooms, that are unblemished and firm and weigh about 3 ounces each. You can substitute red or white wine vinegar for the sherry vinegar. You will need a 12-inch nonstick skillet with a tight-fitting lid for this recipe.

1¼	**pounds king trumpet mushrooms**
1¼	**teaspoons table salt, divided**
½	**cup extra-virgin olive oil**
8	**garlic cloves, lightly crushed and peeled**
1	**sprig fresh rosemary**
¼	**cup minced fresh parsley**
2	**tablespoons sherry vinegar**
½	**teaspoon smoked paprika**

1. Trim bottom ½ inch from mushroom stems, then halve mushrooms lengthwise. Cut ¼-inch crosshatch pattern, about 1⁄16 inch deep, on cut sides of mushrooms. Sprinkle 1 teaspoon table salt on cut sides of mushrooms and let sit, cut sides up, for 15 minutes.

2. Heat oil, garlic, and rosemary in 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium-low heat until fragrant, about 2 minutes. Arrange mushroom halves, cut sides down, in even layer in pan (pan will appear crowded at first; mushrooms will shrink as they cook). Heat until bubbles begin to form around edges of mushrooms, about 2 minutes.

3. Reduce heat to low, cover, and cook for 10 minutes. Using tongs, flip mushrooms and continue to cook, covered, until paring knife inserted into mushrooms meets little resistance, 8 to 10 minutes longer.

4. Flip mushrooms, cut sides down, in pan. Transfer garlic to cutting board. Increase heat to medium-high and cook, uncovered, until mushrooms are golden brown on cut sides, 4 to 6 minutes. Transfer mushrooms, cut sides up, to serving platter.

5. Mash garlic into paste with side of large knife. Transfer garlic to medium bowl. Carefully pour warm oil from pan into bowl with garlic paste; discard rosemary sprig. Whisk in parsley, vinegar, paprika, and remaining ¼ teaspoon table salt. Drizzle ¼ cup dressing over mushrooms. Sprinkle with flake sea salt, if desired. Serve, passing remaining dressing separately.

2.

1.

3.

GETTING TO KNOW RICE

Here's what you need to know about this versatile pantry staple. **by Megan Ginsberg**

TYPES OF RICE

There are so many different and delicious types of rice out in the world. Here are the ones we turn to often in the kitchen and how we like to use them.

1. SUSHI RICE

Originating in northeast Asia, sushi (or japonica) rice is now grown extensively in the United States. These plump, short or medum grains cook up fluffy, chewy, and a little sticky.

Use it:
in sushi, bibimbap, and Arroz con Tocino (February/March 2023)

Our favorite:
Lundberg Family Farms Organic California Sushi Rice

2. VALENCIA AND BOMBA RICE

These small, pearly, round, short- to medium-grain rices from Spain have a starch structure that allows them to soak up flavors from stocks and aromatics without turning mushy. Bomba rice is prized in paella because it becomes tender and creamy but maintains its shape.

Use them:
in paellas such as Paella for Two (August/September 2015) and in Arroz con Pollo (August/September 2016)

3. BASMATI RICE

A type of long-grain white rice, this aromatic rice originated in India and is prized for its fluffy, extra-long, slender grains; nutty flavor; and sweet aroma.

Use it:
in pilafs and biryanis such as Chicken Biryani (December/January 2020)

Our favorite:
Daawat Basmati Rice

4. ARBORIO AND CARNAROLI RICE

These traditionally Italian rice varieties are now also grown domestically. They have milky-white, stubby grains.

Use them:
in risottos such as Risotto Milanese (February/March 2023)

Our favorite:
RiceSelect Arborio Rice

5. JASMINE RICE

Native to Thailand and popular in Southeast Asian cuisine, this floral, buttery long-grain rice cooks up sticky and relatively soft while retaining a firm chew.

Use it:
wherever you want its delicate, nuanced floral notes, such as in Garlic Fried Rice (June/July 2022) and Khao Man Gai (August/September 2020)

Our favorite:
Dynasty Jasmine Rice

6. BROWN RICE

This rice is classified as a whole grain because it contains the germ, bran, and endosperm. It cooks up into firm, nutty grains.

Use it:
in pilafs, grain bowls, salads such as Skirt Steak with Tomato, Corn, and Brown Rice Salad (June/July 2021), and in our recipe for Everyday Brown Rice (recipe follows)

Our favorite:
Lundberg Organic Long Grain Brown Rice

7. LONG-GRAIN WHITE RICE

This neutral-flavored white rice is perfect for everyday applications. Carolina Gold is a variety with a gold hue.

Use it:
in side dishes such as Black Beans and Rice (June/July 2019), pilafs, one-pan meals, fried rice, and our recipe for Everyday White Rice (recipe follows)

Our favorite:
Lundberg Organic Long Grain White Rice

4.

7.

WHAT ABOUT A RICE COOKER?

Rice cookers promise perfect rice every time. Our favorite model is the Zojirushi 5.5-Cup Neuro Fuzzy Rice Cooker & Warmer ($164). It produced excellent rice when making both small and large batches.

KEEP WARM
RESET
TIMER
ZOJIRUSHI

5.

STOVETOP LONG-GRAIN WHITE RICE

An everyday staple, rice can be surprisingly difficult to cook perfectly. For a steamed long-grain white rice that's light and tender and clumps together slightly, it's necessary to rinse away excess starch prior to cooking. A ratio of 2 cups rice to 3 cups water ensures that there is enough liquid in the pot to cook the rice through without leaving it wet. The most important step is to let the cooked rice sit off the heat covered for 10 minutes. This allows any extra moisture to be absorbed. Gently fluffing the rice before serving breaks up any large masses.

EVERYDAY WHITE RICE

Serves 4 to 6
Total Time: 40 minutes

It's important to rinse the rice before cooking it to remove excess starch from the grains. Omit the salt if you're serving this rice with a salty dish such as a stir-fry.

2 cups long-grain white rice
3 cups water
½ teaspoon salt (optional)

1. Place rice in fine-mesh strainer and rinse under running water until water running through rice is almost clear, about 1½ minutes, agitating rice with your hand every so often.
2. Combine rice, water, and salt, if using, in large saucepan and bring to simmer over high heat. Stir rice with rubber spatula, dislodging any rice that sticks to bottom of saucepan.
3. Cover, reduce heat to low, and cook for 20 minutes. (Steam should steadily emit from sides of saucepan. If water bubbles out from under lid, reduce heat slightly.)
4. Remove from heat; do not uncover. Let stand, covered, for 10 minutes. Gently fluff rice with fork. Serve.

STOVETOP LONG-GRAIN BROWN RICE

While you can just cook brown rice the same way as white rice (they're both rice, after all), because brown rice retains its bran, it takes longer to cook. So to speed up its cooking time and help it cook more evenly, we boil it in an abundant amount of water, like pasta.

EVERYDAY BROWN RICE

Serves: 4 to 6
Total Time: 45 minutes

Since you're using a large amount of water to cook the brown rice, you don't need to rinse it first to remove surface starch.

1½ cups long-grain brown rice
1 teaspoon table salt

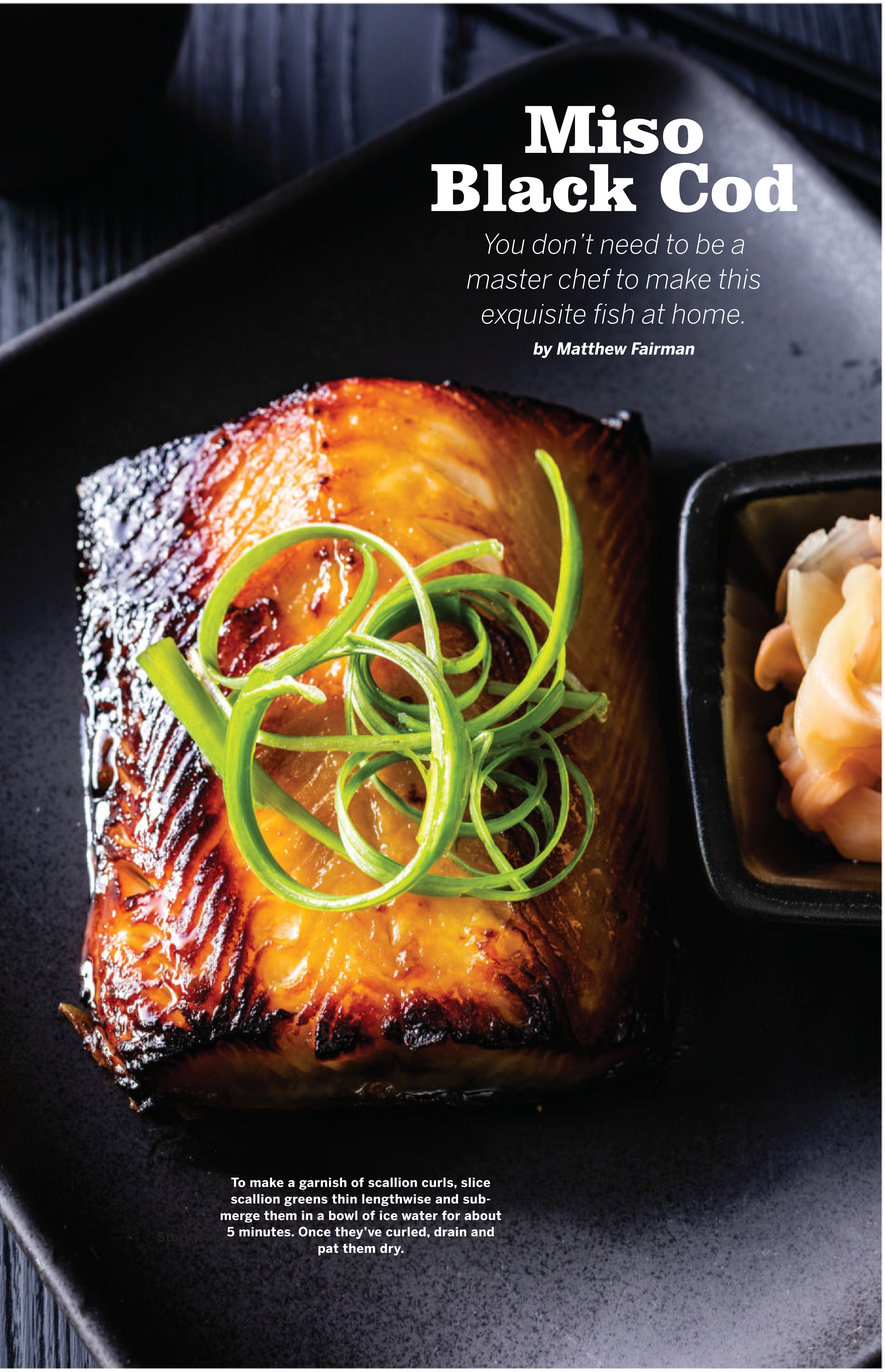
Bring 3 quarts water to boil in large saucepan. Add rice and salt and cook until tender, 25 to 30 minutes. Drain well and serve.

6.

Miso Black Cod

You don't need to be a master chef to make this exquisite fish at home.

by Matthew Fairman



To make a garnish of scallion curls, slice scallion greens thin lengthwise and submerge them in a bowl of ice water for about 5 minutes. Once they've curled, drain and pat them dry.

THE JAPANESE TECHNIQUE of preserving fish and other meats in sweet white miso (saikyozuke) originated in Kyoto long before Chef Nobuyuki "Nobu" Matsuhisa applied it to black cod at his Los Angeles sushi bar in the 1980s (see "Who Is Nobu?"). But Nobu, with his specific rendition of black cod with miso, is responsible for putting it on the map, creating a version of the dish so unforgettable that his name is now nearly synonymous with the technique. It's a testament to the excellence of the recipe that it remains on the menu at Nobu's restaurants (of which there are now more than 40 across the globe).

Happily, you don't need a reservation at Nobu to taste it for yourself. Nor do you need to apprentice yourself to a sushi master to learn how to make it. All you need is fresh black cod—though sustainably caught Chilean sea bass, salmon, and arctic char make worthy substitutes—a handful of other Japanese pantry staples, a little bit of time, and a broiler. Once you've sourced the fish (see "A Cod of Another Color"), executing the recipe is extraordinarily simple: Place the fish in a stir-together marinade overnight, wipe off the excess marinade, and then broil the fillets briefly until cooked through and well browned.

As simple as it is, the exceptional results are always surprising. The gorgeously browned fish is firm, but even when cooked under such intense heat, it remains succulent. One of black cod's many nicknames is butterfish, and it's easy to understand why. It's a luscious, rich fish with tender flesh and a mellow, unique flavor. The complex, salty-sweet marinade cuts the richness and seasons the fish completely and harmoniously while also acting as a cure that pulls out excess moisture. The result is delectable, pleasantly firm, plump fish that flakes effortlessly. It's perhaps the easiest recipe there is for fish that's truly restaurant caliber.

MISO BLACK COD

Serves 4   Total Time: 30 minutes, plus 8 hours marinating

Black cod (also known as sablefish) is increasingly available in fish markets and supermarkets across the country. For the freshest possible fish, ask your fishmonger if you can purchase the black cod still frozen. Thaw the frozen fillets overnight in the refrigerator. Black cod often contains a row of small pin bones running down the center line of the fillet; they are difficult to remove from the raw fillets but slide out easily once the fillets are cooked. It's also easy to cut on either side of the center line of the cooked fillets to avoid them. Salmon (either farmed or wild), Chilean sea bass, or arctic char can be substituted for the black cod. If using wild salmon or arctic char, cook the fillets to 120 degrees (for medium-rare), and start checking for doneness early. Red miso can be substituted for the white miso. Garnish with scallions, if desired.

1	**cup white miso**
⅔	**cup sugar**
⅓	**cup mirin**
¼	**cup sake**
3	**tablespoons soy sauce**
1	**tablespoon toasted sesame oil**
4	**(6- to 8-ounce) skin-on black cod fillets**
	Pickled sliced ginger

1. Whisk miso, sugar, mirin, sake, soy sauce, and oil together in medium bowl. Pat cod dry with paper towels and place in 1-gallon zipper-lock bag. Pour miso mixture over cod. Press out air, seal bag, and turn to coat cod in marinade. Refrigerate for at least 8 hours or up to 24 hours, turning occasionally.

2. Adjust oven rack 8 inches from broiler and heat broiler. Set wire rack in rimmed baking sheet and line with aluminum foil. Lightly spray foil with vegetable oil spray. Wipe excess marinade from cod with your fingers, leaving thin layer on cod, and transfer to prepared wire rack, skin side down.

3. Broil until cod is deeply browned and registers 125 degrees, 8 to 12 minutes, rotating sheet halfway through broiling and shielding fillets with foil if they begin to get too dark. Serve with pickled ginger.

Who Is Nobu?

In his book *Nobu: A Memoir* (2014), Nobuyuki "Nobu" Matsuhisa writes that his "second dream"—to become a sushi chef—was born when his eldest brother took him to try his first sushi. His "first dream" was to travel overseas like his father, who had died years earlier in a motorcycle accident. The road to achieving those dreams wasn't always smooth.

Nobu was expelled from high school after driving his older brother's car without a license and crashing it. At 17 he became a live-in apprentice to a sushi chef in Tokyo. Nobu excelled, and a prominent Japanese-Peruvian businessman and frequent guest at the restaurant invited him to open a new sushi restaurant in Lima, Peru. There Nobu found some success but was unwilling to compromise the quality of his ingredients; he had a falling out with his partner, quit his job, and eventually moved back to Japan.

Embarrassed, poor, and seeing no future for himself and family in Japan, Nobu moved to Alaska as a partner in another sushi restaurant. After helping build the restaurant with his bare hands, Nobu watched it burn down over the Thanksgiving holiday, only 50 days after opening.

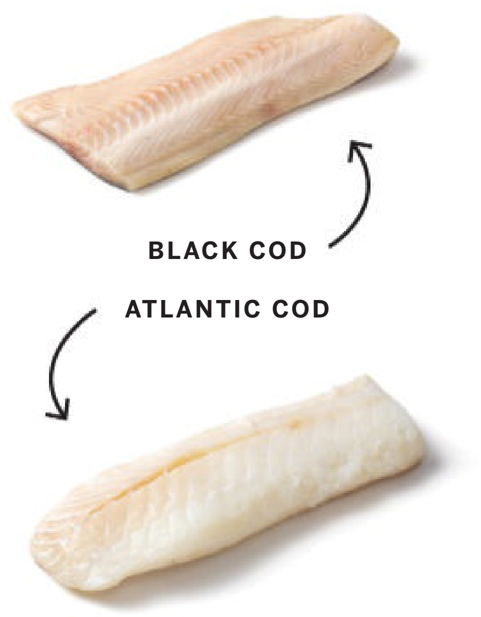
Nobu called on an acquaintance in Los Angeles, who asked him to take over the six-seat sushi bar in his restaurant. There, he began to cultivate a following, experimenting with original sushi influenced by global cuisines: a quick-marinated ceviche from Peru; fried soft-shell crab maki; and a miso-marinated, grilled black cod dish using a fish he could source cheaply. His creative dishes were a hit. Word spread, and Nobu's sushi bar became very busy.

With growing success and acclaim, Nobu found seed money for his own place, which he opened in 1987 on La Cienega Boulevard in Beverly Hills, California. Matsuhisa is still in business today and is the flagship of more than 40 restaurants worldwide, where diners can still enjoy the famous black cod with miso.

Photo: George Rose/Getty

A Cod of Another Color

Although black cod (*Anoplopoma fimbria*, aka sablefish, butterfish, skilfish, coalfish, and gindara) bears some similarities in appearance to Atlantic and Pacific cod, it is not actually part of the cod family. Black cod, a deepwater fish found in the Pacific, contains more oils and is much richer, making it perfectly suitable for fast cooking with dry heat (methods that would quickly overcook and dry out Atlantic cod). Black cod's high fat content means it pairs well with salty acidic flavors that can cut its richness.



During development for this recipe we were able to find black cod in several supermarkets, including Whole Foods Markets, across the country (from Louisiana to Missouri to Massachusetts). Jason Hedlund, Whole Foods' global team leader of seafood procurement, confirmed that most Whole Foods stores stock black cod (sold as sablefish) year-round and that it can be specially ordered to stores that don't always stock it.

Outside of Whole Foods, Hedlund recommends looking for black cod "from fisheries certified to meet the Marine Stewardship Council Standard for sustainable fishing or rated either 'Green' or 'Yellow' by the Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch program." You can ask your local fishmonger about availability or have black cod shipped to your home still frozen from a number of online sources, such as Sea to Table (sea2table.com).

Seared Romaine with Ginger Dressing

In a salad rut? For a change of pace, turn up the heat. **by Amanda Luchtel**

A blast of heat adds char and depth to the romaine in this salad.

WHEN YOU HEAR that you're going to be served romaine lettuce, what do you picture? Likely a verdant salad starring the crisp, juicy raw lettuce, right? But romaine, like many other lettuces and greens, takes well to cooking. Grilled or seared Caesar salads—where halved heads of romaine are quickly charred before being dressed—are one example of how cooked romaine can shine. This recipe, where we sear the romaine in a skillet before tossing it in a ginger- and oyster sauce–forward dressing, is another.

There are a few critical steps to searing romaine lettuce well. Trim the ends from the heads but leave a bit of the base intact; this helps hold the heads together. Wash the halves and dry them well on towels (otherwise the extra water will prevent them from easily browning in the skillet). And use a preheated cast-iron pan for the cooking: Cast iron gets really hot, so the lettuce can brown quickly without staying on the heat so long that it overcooks and totally slumps.

As for the dressing, for bold flavor we chose an umami-rich mixture of oyster sauce, lemon juice, scallion whites, ginger, raw garlic, and sesame oil. Drizzle the seared romaine halves with some of the dressing, and then sprinkle them with sliced scallion greens, sliced Thai chiles, and toasted sesame seeds. Serve the remaining dressing on the side for those who just can't get enough.

● CAST IRON–SEARED ROMAINE WITH OYSTER SAUCE, GINGER, AND SESAME

Serves 4 to 6   Total Time: 45 minutes

Look for tight, dense romaine hearts that are heavy for their size; larger heads can be peeled down to the correct weight. You can substitute other fresh chiles, such as jalapeños, for the Thai chile, or simply omit them if you prefer a milder dish.

3	**scallions, white parts minced, green parts sliced thin**
¼	**cup oyster sauce**
1	**tablespoon grated fresh ginger**
1	**tablespoon lemon juice**
1	**tablespoon water**
2	**teaspoons toasted sesame oil**
1	**garlic clove, minced**
3	**(8-ounce) romaine lettuce hearts**
3	**tablespoons vegetable oil**
½	**teaspoon table salt**
½	**teaspoon pepper**
1	**tablespoon sesame seeds, toasted**
1–2	**Thai chiles, stemmed and sliced thin**

1. Whisk scallion whites, oyster sauce, ginger, lemon juice, water, sesame oil, and garlic together in small bowl; set dressing aside.

2. Line rimmed baking sheet with dish towel. Trim root ends from romaine hearts, leaving bases intact so that layers stay together. Cut romaine hearts in half lengthwise. Rinse thoroughly between layers to remove any dirt. Transfer romaine to prepared sheet, cut sides down, and pat dry with second dish towel.

3. Heat 12-inch cast-iron skillet over medium-high heat for about 10 minutes. Brush romaine evenly with vegetable oil and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Place half of romaine, cut sides down and alternating directions, in pan and cook until well browned, about 4 minutes. Flip romaine and cook until second sides are spotty brown and leaves are softened, about 1 minute. Transfer to serving platter, cut sides up. Repeat with remaining romaine.

4. Drizzle half of dressing over romaine. Sprinkle with sesame seeds, chile, and scallion greens. Serve, passing remaining dressing separately.

Dry the Romaine for the Best Browning

Transfer romaine halves, cut side down, to dish towel–lined baking sheet and thoroughly pat dry.

Hot sauce gives these supersavory grits punch.

Extra-Cheesy Grits

Simple grits are great. These grits are amazing.

by Kelly Song

BEFORE CREAMY, hearty grits became a Southern staple, they were known as “grist,” a dish that Native Americans introduced to British colonists. The stone-ground corn resembled hominy; the Native Americans used it as currency, and they shared its preparation methods with the foreign settlers. Grits became so well loved in the United States that there’s an entire region named after them—the “Grits Belt” spans from Texas to Virginia, where grits abound in diners and on weeknight dinner tables alike.

In recent history, grits have taken on yet another identity. They’ve transformed from a simple mixture of water and ground corn to a creamy, savory—and often cheesy—culinary staple. These extra-cheesy grits benefit from flavor-boosting ingredients inspired by macaroni and cheese. Worcestershire sauce, Dijon mustard, and hot sauce add complexity and savoriness, while cooking the grits in a mixture of milk and water provides both creaminess and thorough hydration. Less flavorful cheeses, such as American and mild cheddar, tasted too bland and milky when mixed into the grits; using extra-sharp cheddar and a hint of Parmesan allows the cheesy flavors to shine through.

These ultrasavory grits are as flavorful as they are versatile; pair them with bacon and runny eggs for breakfast, spoon them next to a pile of garlicky greens, or simply enjoy them by the bowlful with extra hot sauce.

EXTRA-CHEESY GRITS

Serves 4 to 6 Total time: 45 minutes

We developed this recipe with widely available Quaker Old Fashioned Grits. If you use our winning grits (Anson Mills Pencil Cob Grits), or other more coarsely ground grits, you will need to increase the simmering time in step 1 to about 50 minutes.

2¼	**cups whole milk**
2	**cups water, plus extra for thinning**
½	**teaspoon table salt**
½	**teaspoon pepper**
1	**cup grits**
6	**ounces extra-sharp cheddar cheese, shredded (1½ cups)**
2	**ounces Parmesan cheese, grated (1 cup)**
2	**tablespoons unsalted butter**
2	**teaspoons Dijon mustard**
2	**teaspoons hot sauce, plus extra for seasoning**
2	**teaspoons Worcestershire sauce**

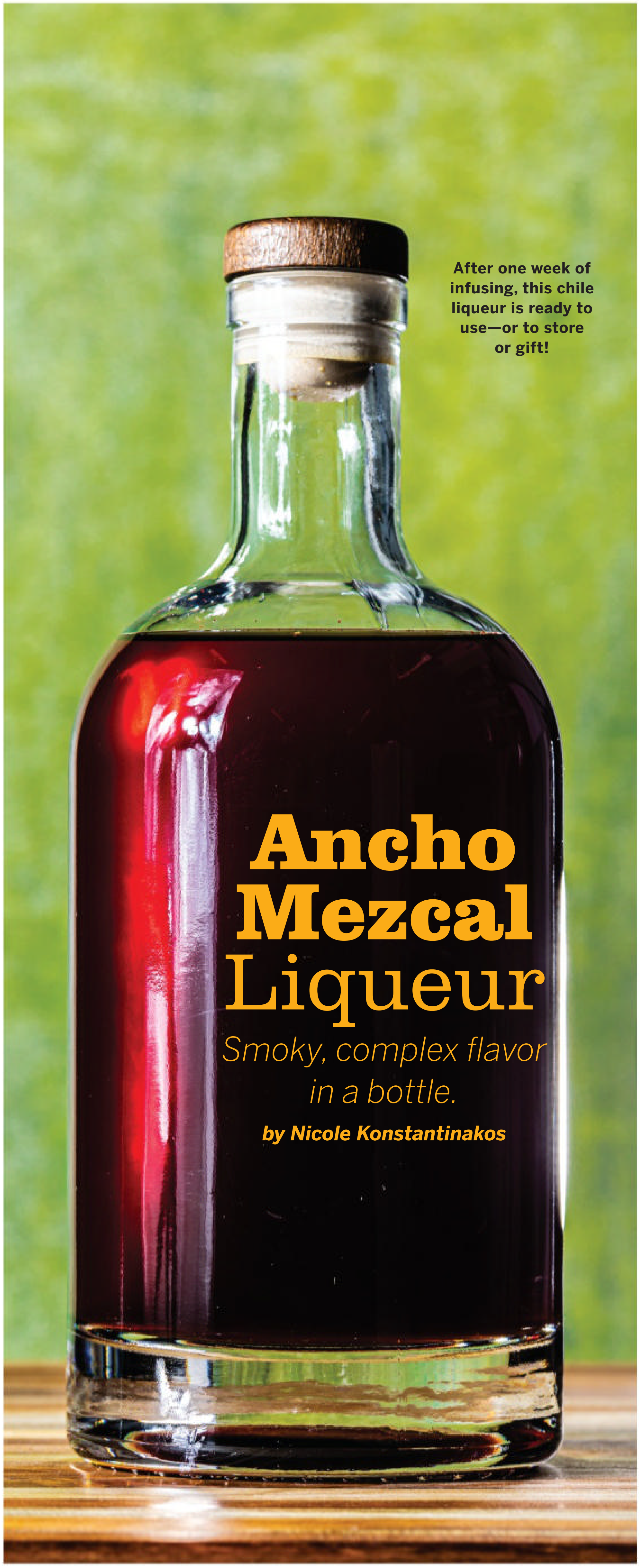
1. Bring milk, water, salt, and pepper to boil in medium saucepan over medium-high heat. Slowly whisk in grits. Reduce heat to low, cover, and simmer, whisking often, until grits are thick and creamy, about 25 minutes. (Add extra water, 2 tablespoons at a time, if grits become too stiff while cooking.)

2. Whisk cheddar, Parmesan, butter, mustard, hot sauce, and Worcestershire into grits until cheese is melted, about 1 minute. Off heat, season with salt, pepper, and hot sauce to taste. Serve.

Grits-Mac Mashup

Using ingredients typically found in macaroni and cheese—Dijon mustard, hot sauce, Worcestershire sauce, and, of course, cheddar cheese—makes these grits supersavory and reminiscent of the classic.

Cracker Barrel
EXTRA SHARP WHITE
MOUTARDE DE DIJON
TABASCO
LEA & PERRINS
The Original
WORCESTERSHIRE SAUCE



After one week of infusing, this chile liqueur is ready to use—or to store or gift!

Ancho Mezcal Liqueur

Smoky, complex flavor in a bottle.

by Nicole Konstantinakos

HOMEMADE LIQUEURS are easy to prepare and infinitely customizable, and they can bring a whole new level of creativity and originality to your cocktail game. Our straightforward approach involves infusing a base spirit with aromatics, straining out the solids, and then finishing the liqueur with a measured amount of simple syrup to balance and round out the flavors.

With summer just around the corner, we wanted to spice things up in anticipation of margarita season. This ancho-infused, mezcal-based liqueur, with its smoky, earthy, mildly peppery flavor and its deep amber color, was just the ticket. We chose mezcal as the base spirit because we love its smokiness and complexity (see "Tequila's Bolder Cousin"). Ancho chiles, with their own inherent smokiness and mild fruity notes, are a perfect complement, adding depth without clashing with the unique character of the mezcal.

This liqueur inspired us to create a home run–hitting Ancho-Pineapple Mezcal Margarita with Tajín, but you can get the party started however you like. Close your eyes, take a sip, and use your imagination!

Tequila's Bolder Cousin

Mezcal is distilled from any type of agave plant. Its smoky, complex flavor comes from the process of slow-cooking and smoking (traditionally in earthen pit ovens) hearts of agave plants before they are fermented and distilled.

ANCHO MEZCAL LIQUEUR

Makes about 32 ounces

Total Time: 15 minutes, plus 1 week infusing

You can substitute tequila (we prefer to use blanco tequila) for the mezcal, but the flavor will be less complex. For a spicier liqueur, include the chile seeds when steeping. You will need a quart-size glass jar with a tight-fitting lid for this recipe.

1	**dried ancho chile, stemmed, seeded, and torn into 1-inch pieces (¼ cup)**
24	**ounces (3 cups) mezcal**
4	**ounces (½ cup) Simple Syrup (recipe follows)**

1. Place ancho chile and mezcal in quart-size glass jar. Cover tightly and shake to combine. Store jar in cool, dark place for 1 week, shaking mixture once every other day.

2. Set fine-mesh strainer in medium bowl and line with triple layer of cheesecloth. Strain mezcal mixture through prepared strainer, pressing on solids to extract as much liquid as possible; discard solids.

3. Return infused mezcal to clean jar and add simple syrup. Cover and gently shake to combine. (Liqueur can be stored in cool, dark place for up to 1 year. Shake gently before using.)

SIMPLE SYRUP

Makes about 16 ounces

Total Time: 15 minutes

Use this syrup in our Ancho Mezcal Liqueur and in other liqueurs and cocktails.

1½	**cups sugar**
1½	**cups water**

Heat sugar and water in small saucepan over medium-high heat, whisking until sugar has dissolved completely, about 5 minutes. Let syrup cool completely. (Cooled syrup can be refrigerated for up to 1 month.)

Ancho-Pineapple
Mezcal Margarita

Pineapple juice balances the smoke and spice in this twist on the classic. ***by Mark Huxsoll***

Chile-infused mezcal is the base of this pleasantly smoky, lightly spiced margarita.

SWEET, SOUR, AND a little salty (if you salt the rim), a margarita is perfectly refreshing and endlessly versatile. For a tropical version kissed with smoke and heat, swap out the tequila for our homemade Ancho Mezcal Liqueur, made from mezcal steeped with deep, roasty chiles. Then, to balance the heat, add pineapple juice to the tried-and-true lime juice and Cointreau. Taking inspiration from Mexican culinary culture, where ripe fruits are often dusted with chile products, coat the rim of the glass with Tajín Clásico Seasoning.

● ANCHO-PINEAPPLE MEZCAL MARGARITA WITH TAJÍN

Makes 1 cocktail *Total Time: 10 minutes*

We prefer to use our homemade Ancho Mezcal Liqueur here, but you can substitute a store-bought dark chile liqueur, such as Ancho Reyes, though the base spirit in other liqueurs may vary.

1	**tablespoon Tajín Clásico Seasoning**
	Lime wedge
2	**ounces Ancho Mezcal Liqueur (page 32)**
1½	**ounces pineapple juice**
¾	**ounce lime juice**
½	**ounce Cointreau**

1. Spread seasoning mix into even layer on small saucer. Cut ¼-inch-deep notch crosswise in lime wedge. Place notch of lime wedge on rim of chilled old-fashioned glass. Slide lime wedge around outer edge of rim; discard lime wedge or reserve for another use. Roll moistened rim in seasoning mix to coat; set aside.

2. Combine liqueur, pineapple juice, lime juice, and Cointreau in cocktail shaker, then fill with ice. Shake mixture until fully combined and well chilled, about 15 seconds. Strain cocktail into prepared glass half-filled with ice or with 1 large ice cube. Serve.

Tajín Clásico Seasoning

Tajín Clásico Seasoning is a blend of mild chiles, lime, and sea salt. It has an enticing chile flavor that doesn't overwhelm with heat. And the sea salt makes it a perfect match for both sweet and savory applications. Its punchy lime notes give it a bright acidity that, when paired with sweet tropical fruits such as pineapple, is incredibly delicious and refreshing. Because margaritas taste great with salted rims, using Tajín in place of the salt is a no-brainer to make a cocktail worth repeating.

How to Make the Tajín Rim

1. Spread seasoning mix in small saucer and cut ¼-inch-deep notch in lime wedge.

2. Set notch on rim of glass and run lime wedge around rim to moisten.

3. Roll moistened glass rim in seasoning mix to coat.

Sopa Seca de Fideos

The sauce-plumped noodles are perfect for a wide range of fresh and creamy toppings.

This comfort-food dish—a staple in Mexican and Mexican American cuisine—takes one-pan noodles to the next level.

by Kelly Song

WE ALL HAVE those nights when nothing but a big bowl of noodles will do; for some, it's spaghetti and meatballs. For others, it's lo mein. For many home cooks, the answer to a hearty, one-pan noodle dish is sopa seca, which translates to "dry soup." The dish evolved from sopa de fideos, a popular Mexican noodle soup—in the "dry" version of this dish, the noodles absorb the tomato-based broth, yielding a creamy, saucy consistency. (There is a different dish from Peru called sopa seca that features noodles, meat, and a green sauce; this is not that.)

Like its soupier counterpart, sopa seca is the epitome of weeknight comfort food in Mexican and Mexican American homes. To gain a better understanding of the dish, I consulted with my colleague Janette Zepeda. Zepeda was born in the United States and raised by parents who immigrated from Ixtlán del Río in Nayarit, Mexico. She often shadowed her mother, who served a rotation of classic Mexican dishes in the kitchen.

"Walking home from school, I could always smell what my mom was cooking from a few homes down the street," Zepeda said. And it was often sopa seca. "Later in life I realized that this dish became a comfort food for my family. The smells alone make time travel back to my childhood possible."

Sopa seca is built upon a base of fideos, which are short, thin, golden noodles similar to angel hair pasta. Fideos are usually briefly cooked in oil to enhance their flavor. The browned noodles offer a toasty but fairly neutral base to absorb the sauce—which provides most of sopa seca's character.

Building deep flavor in the simmering liquid was key. Some recipes call for a sauce of blended raw tomatoes, onion, and garlic; however, we found that cooking those ingredients in the skillet beforehand, as many home cooks do, takes the edge off any raw flavors. Precooking the tomatoes also yields a creamier, more velvety consistency.

After cooking, the tomato mixture is blended with oregano, various seasonings, and chipotle chiles, which add a distinct smokiness and subtle heat typical of sopa seca. Rather than using chicken broth to loosen the mixture, we combine water and chicken bouillon powder, a classic trick for boosting savory flavor in soups and sauces. Knorr brand bouillon, specifically, is sometimes called the "secret ingredient" in sopa seca, providing the distinct salty, round flavor found in home-cooked versions.

"Knorr is something that most Mexican households have in their pantries—talk about an absolute staple," Zepeda said. "Growing up, I didn't know the name of the actual product; it was always my mom or grandma sending me over to the pantry to 'grab the bottle with the chicken on it.'"

The sauce is then combined with the noodles and simmered in the pan, covered to preserve moisture. As the mixture cooks, the noodles absorb the flavorful liquid and expand, while the sauce lusciously coats each strand. Stirring occasionally (but not too frequently) allows some noodles to crisp slightly on the bottom of the skillet as the sauce simmers.

Once finished, sopa seca is usually served with a cooling topping to tone down the heat; Mexican crema is traditional, but sour cream also works. Additional toppings include queso fresco, avocado, and cilantro for fresh and bright flavors to contrast the creamy sauce or some chicharrones for crunch. Or in true homestyle fashion, the noodles can be repurposed to your own liking, whether they're fresh or left over.

"My mom would serve this dish and its toppings along with tacos de papa, which is a deep-fried mashed potato taco," Zepeda said. "Everyone always built their dish slightly differently depending on their preference."

However you serve it, sopa seca is a great dish to have in your arsenal to satisfy a craving for noodles. It comes together in a flash, is endlessly customizable, and checks all the boxes for adding pizzazz to weeknight cooking—it's smoky, spicy, tangy, and extremely flavorful.

Knorr Granulated Bouillon

This flavorful powder is a staple in Mexican and Mexican American homes. In dishes such as sopa seca it is combined with water and used in place of chicken broth to add salty, savory flavor.

Knorr
CALDO CON SABOR DE POLLO
CHICKEN Flavor BOUILLON

SOPA SECA

Serves 4

Total Time: 1 hour

Look for short, "broken" fideos pasta, about 1 inch in length, and not coiled noodles, which are also known as fideos. If you can't find short fideos, substitute 8 ounces thin spaghetti or angel hair, broken into 1- to 2-inch lengths; loosely wrap pasta in dish towel and then press the bundle against the corner of the counter to break into short pieces. Knorr brand chicken bouillon is traditional; if you can't find the loose powder, you can crush two to three bouillon cubes and then measure 2 tablespoons. For a spicier dish, use the greater amount of chipotle chile.

8	**ounces fideos (2 cups)**
¼	**cup vegetable oil, divided**
1	**pound plum tomatoes, cored and quartered (4 to 6 tomatoes)**
1	**onion, chopped**
2	**garlic cloves, smashed and peeled**
2	**cups water, plus extra as needed**
2	**tablespoons chicken bouillon powder**
½–1	**tablespoon minced canned chipotle chile in adobo sauce**
1	**teaspoon dried oregano**
½	**teaspoon table salt**
½	**teaspoon pepper**
1	**avocado, halved, pitted, and sliced thin**
1½	**ounces queso fresco, crumbled (⅓ cup)**
½	**cup Mexican crema**
¼	**cup chopped fresh cilantro**
½	**cup crushed chicharrones (optional)**

1. Heat fideos and 3 tablespoons oil in 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium-high heat, stirring constantly, until fideos are deep golden brown but not burnt, 4 to 5 minutes. Transfer fideos to large bowl; set aside. Wipe skillet clean with paper towels.

2. Heat remaining 1 tablespoon oil in now-empty skillet over medium heat until shimmering. Add tomatoes, onion, and garlic and cook until tomatoes are very soft and have released some of their juices, 8 to 10 minutes.

3. Process tomato mixture, water, bouillon powder, chipotle, oregano, salt, and pepper in blender until smooth, about 1 minute, scraping down sides of blender as needed. Transfer mixture to 8-cup liquid measuring cup; add extra water as needed to reach 5 cups.

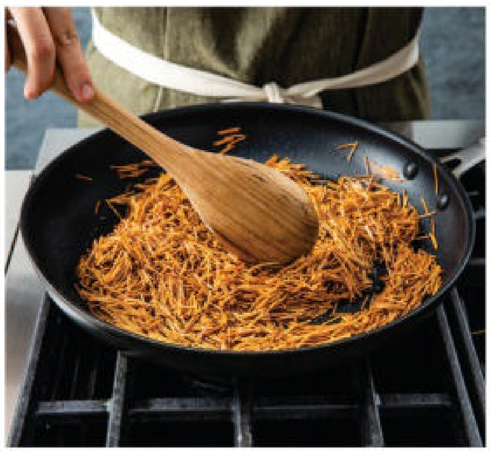
4. Transfer tomato mixture to again-empty skillet. Using rubber spatula or wooden spoon, gently stir in fideos until fully submerged in tomato mixture. Spread fideos into even layer, and bring to simmer over medium-high heat. Reduce heat to low, cover, and simmer, stirring every 5 minutes, until fideos are tender and sauce is fully absorbed, 20 to 25 minutes, adjusting heat as needed to maintain very gentle simmer. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

5. Transfer sopa seca to serving bowls. Divide avocado, queso fresco, crema, and cilantro evenly over fideos. Sprinkle with chicharrones, if using. Serve.

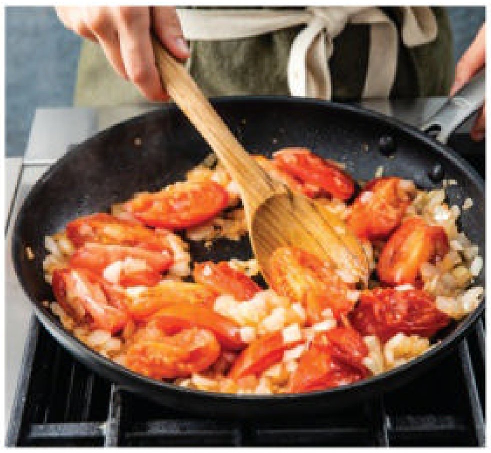
Fideos

Similar to angel hair pasta, fideos are very thin noodles.

Making Sopa Seca

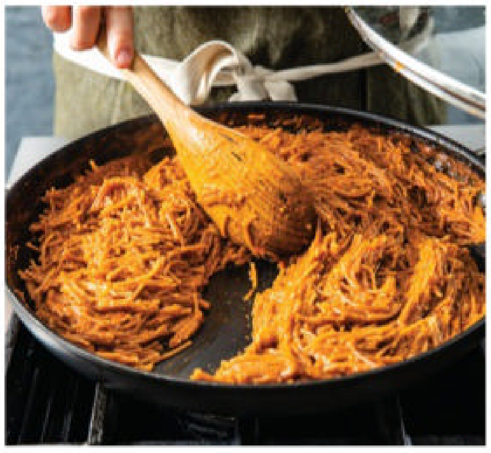


1. Toast fideos in oil until deep golden brown and remove from skillet.



2. Cook tomatoes, onion, and garlic until softened.

3. Process tomato mixture and seasonings until smooth.

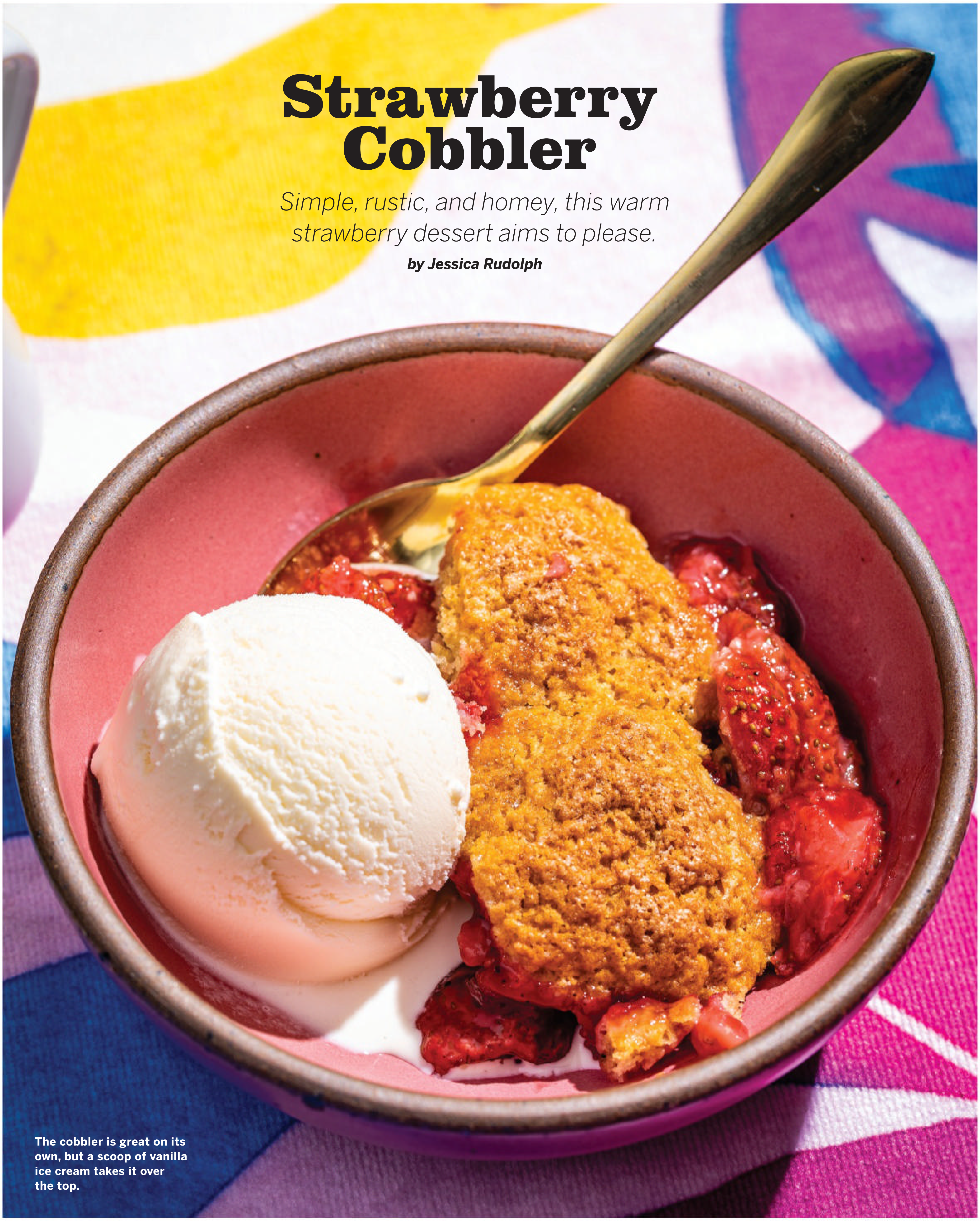


4. Simmer fideos in tomato mixture until tender and sauce is absorbed.

Strawberry Cobbler

Simple, rustic, and homey, this warm strawberry dessert aims to please.

by Jessica Rudolph



The cobbler is great on its own, but a scoop of vanilla ice cream takes it over the top.

CAN YOU IDENTIFY a cobbler in a lineup of baked fruit desserts? If not, you're not alone. In fact, you could be staring down a table with half a dozen seemingly different rustic fruit desserts, all of which are somebody's cobbler. Though it's always a baked dessert with a fruit filling (typically stone fruit, berries, or apples), a cobbler could be topped with gobs of biscuit dough, a thin cake batter, or a flaky pastry crust, depending whom you ask. Some cobblers have pastry crust on the bottom too—indistinguishable from a pie if not for the baking dish! (Celebrated chef and cookbook author Edna Lewis created one such cobbler; it's said that she sometimes even mixed dough trimmings right into the fruit filling to thicken it.)

For a strawberry cobbler, the biscuit-topped version is our favorite. Strawberries contain a lot of moisture, becoming very soft when cooked, so a substantial biscuit topping provides the perfect balance. The end result is somewhere between strawberry shortcakes and biscuits with jam but is easier than both.

The filling is simply a bunch of halved strawberries tossed with sugar, cornstarch, and a hefty pour of vanilla extract. If you're feeling gutsy, you can add some ground black pepper to the mix too; this surprising addition will actually enhance the fruity flavor of the strawberries, providing subtle background warmth. The filling is then spread out in a 13 by 9-inch baking dish and topped with dollops of biscuit dough.

A stir-together drop-biscuit dough makes a light, buttery topping and is so easy: Add melted butter to cold buttermilk—the butter will clump, creating pockets of butter in the dough. Stir that mixture into the dry ingredients and as the butter melts during baking, the water in the butter evaporates and steams, producing lighter biscuits. Dividing the topping into many smaller portions instead of larger biscuit-size mounds makes it easy to scoop out different amounts of cobbler per guest (no one is committed to a whole biscuit or limited to just one biscuit). Once cooked, the biscuit dollops will slump together, making a cobblestone appearance that is characteristic of this style of cobbler.

Depending on the company, you might have trouble convincing your guests this is a cobbler, but you certainly won't have trouble convincing them to eat it. And really, who cares what it's called when it tastes this good?

The American Table

The term "cobbler" can mean many different things, depending on where you're from and your family's traditions. The origin of these baked fruit desserts can be traced to early colonial America; British settlers improvised their traditional desserts (such as steamed puddings with suet) with what they had on hand, topping stewed fruit with pieces of dough. Most (relatively) modern versions call for topping the fruit filling with drop biscuit or dumpling dough, rolled-out pie dough, or cake batter. The name "cobbler" was used as early as 1859, but it's unclear whether it came from "cobeler," an old word for a type of wooden bowl; the dessert's cobblestone appearance; or the fact that it was simply "cobbled" together. According to some sources, grunts, slumps, sonkers, Bettys, and pandowdies are all types of cobblers.

Strawberry Huller

Our winning strawberry huller, the **StemGem Strawberry Hull Remover by Chef'n ($8)**, safely and easily removes leaves and stems without sacrificing much fruit.

STRAWBERRY COBBLER

Serves 6 to 8   Total Time: 1½ hours, plus 30 minutes cooling

We like how the sharp warmth of black pepper accentuates the strawberries' fruitiness, but you can omit it for a more traditional flavor. We prefer the flavor of fresh strawberries here, but you can substitute frozen if fresh are unavailable; simply swap in 3 pounds of halved frozen strawberries (no need to thaw). If you're using a metal baking pan, the cobbler will likely be done at the beginning of the time range, but ovens and pans vary, so it's important to follow visual cues. Serve with vanilla ice cream, whipped cream, or a drizzle of chilled heavy cream.

FILLING

¾ cup (5¼ ounces) sugar
3 tablespoons cornstarch
¾ teaspoon coarsely ground pepper (optional)
3 pounds fresh strawberries, hulled and halved
4 teaspoons vanilla extract

TOPPING

1½ cups (7½ ounces) all-purpose flour
¼ cup (1¾ ounces) plus 2 teaspoons sugar, divided
1½ teaspoons baking powder
½ teaspoon baking soda
½ teaspoon table salt
¾ cup buttermilk, chilled
8 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted, divided

1. FOR THE FILLING: Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 375 degrees. Combine sugar; cornstarch; and pepper, if using, in large bowl. Add strawberries and vanilla and mix gently with rubber spatula to combine. Transfer strawberry mixture to 13 by 9-inch baking dish or pan.

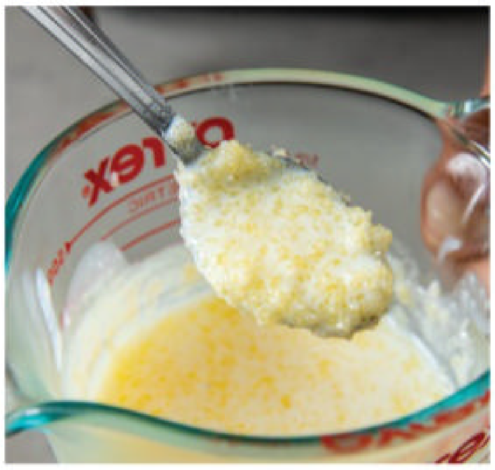
2. FOR THE TOPPING: Whisk flour, ¼ cup sugar, baking powder, baking soda, and salt together in large bowl. Stir buttermilk and 6 tablespoons melted butter together in 2-cup liquid measuring cup (butter will clump; this is OK). Add buttermilk mixture to flour mixture and stir with rubber spatula until just incorporated.

3. Using 2 large soupspoons, drop about twenty-four 1-inch-diameter portions of dough evenly over strawberry mixture. Brush tops of dough with remaining 2 tablespoons melted butter and sprinkle with remaining 2 teaspoons sugar.

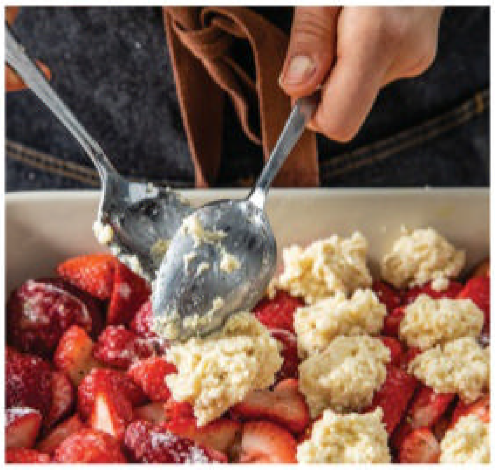
4. Bake until bubbling, strawberry juice looks thick and syrupy, biscuits are golden brown, and toothpick inserted in center of biscuits comes out clean, 50 minutes to 1 hour. Let cobbler cool on wire rack for at least 30 minutes. Serve cobbler warm or at room temperature.

Keys to Success

Here's how to achieve light biscuits in a cobblestone pattern.



1. The mixed buttermilk and butter should clump; the resulting pockets of butter create a light texture.



2. Evenly dollop the biscuit dough over the filling, leaving space between dollops.

Semifreddo

The ultimate frozen dessert for a dinner party.

by Kelly Song

You don't need an ice cream maker for this five-ingredient frozen treat.

SEMIFREDDO—WHICH TRANSLATES TO “half cold” in Italian—is an elegant, sliceable dessert made for a crowd. Semifreddo's frozen base walks the line between mousse and ice cream, with whipped eggs and cream lending a fluffy, velvety mouthfeel. The base can serve as a blank canvas for a variety of adornments. Swirl in some jam; top with crushed nuts; or top with a chocolate, caramel, or fruit sauce as desired. For textural contrast, this version features crunchy crushed amaretti cookies (a classic Italian mix-in). With its make-ahead advantages, you can store this elegant dessert in the freezer, and when a surprise dinner party strikes, simply stroll out with this showstopper, slice for each guest, and dig in.

SEMIFREDDO WITH CRUSHED AMARETTI COOKIES

Serves 8 Total Time: 30 minutes, plus 8 hours freezing

If amaretti cookies are unavailable, you can substitute shortbread cookies (note that their texture will be slightly softer); add ½ teaspoon almond extract to the egg mixture before beating in step 2 to replace the almond flavor of the amaretti, if desired. We prefer to heat the egg mixture in a heavy, heatproof glass or ceramic bowl in step 2; if you use a metal bowl, pay attention to the mixture as it heats, and whisk continuously to ensure that the mixture doesn't heat unevenly at the edges. Serve topped with Apricot-Honey Sauce (page 44), if desired.

1½ cups heavy cream
4 large eggs
¾ cup (5¼ ounces) sugar
⅛ teaspoon table salt
2½ ounces amaretti cookies, crushed into ¼-inch pieces (about 1 cup)

1. Line loaf pan with plastic wrap, leaving 3-inch overhang on all sides. Using stand mixer fitted with whisk, whip cream on medium-low speed until foamy, 30 to 60 seconds. Increase speed to high and whip until soft peaks form, 1 to 3 minutes. Transfer cream to large bowl and cover with plastic; refrigerate until ready to use.

2. Whisk eggs, sugar, and salt together in medium heatproof bowl set over large saucepan containing 1 inch barely simmering water, making sure water does not touch bottom of bowl. Whisk continuously until egg mixture reaches 160 degrees, 5 to 8 minutes. Carefully separate bowl from saucepan and, using rubber spatula, transfer egg mixture to clean bowl of stand mixer. Using whisk attachment, beat on medium-high speed until mixture is thick, pale, and doubled in volume, 3 to 4 minutes.

3. Remove bowl from stand mixer. Using rubber spatula, gently fold in half of whipped cream until just incorporated, then fold in amaretti cookies. Fold in remaining cream until just incorporated and no streaks of cream remain. Transfer mixture to prepared pan and smooth top with rubber spatula. Cover with plastic and freeze until firm, at least 8 hours or up to 2 weeks.

4. When ready to serve, remove plastic from top and invert pan onto cutting board or serving platter. Gently tug on overhanging plastic to release semifreddo from pan; discard plastic. Smooth surface with spatula, if desired. Dip slicing knife in hot water and wipe dry. Slice semifreddo about 1 inch thick, transferring slices to individual plates and dipping and wiping knife after each slice. Serve immediately.

BLUEBERRY SWIRL SEMIFREDDO

Omit cookies. In step 2, add ½ teaspoon almond extract (optional) to egg mixture in bowl of stand mixer before beating. After second addition of whipped cream in step 3, transfer one-third of mixture to prepared pan. Swirl in 2 tablespoons blueberry jam with skewer or butter knife. Repeat twice more with remaining mixture and 4 more tablespoons jam.

Glossary of Frozen Desserts

GELATO
Italian ice cream with less air, thus a denser texture

SHERBET
Typically a dairy base flavored with fruit, and lighter than ice cream

GRANITA
A chunky, (usually) dairy-free dessert made with water, sugar, and flavorings

SEMIFREDDO
A dense, sliceable, dairy-rich frozen dessert with origins in Italy

ICE CREAM
Made with a combination of cream and milk

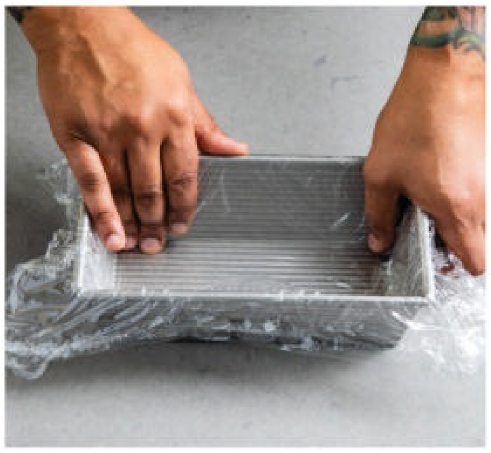
SORBET
The French word for "sherbet," although it never contains dairy

Ingredient Spotlight

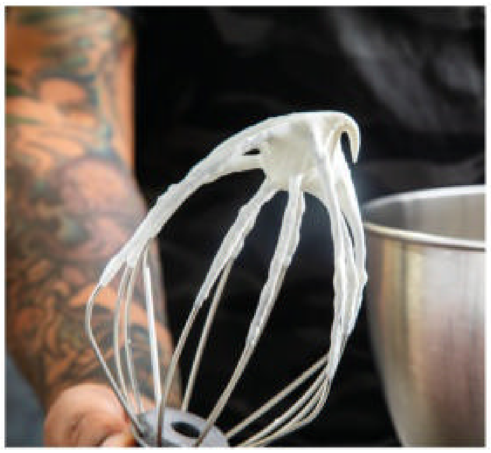
AMARETTI COOKIES

These crisp, crunchy Italian cookies have an almond-forward flavor. While they are traditionally made with almonds, some are actually made from apricot pits (apricots and almonds are related botanically). One popular brand is Lazzaroni, which is distinguished by the decorative red tin the cookies are sold in.

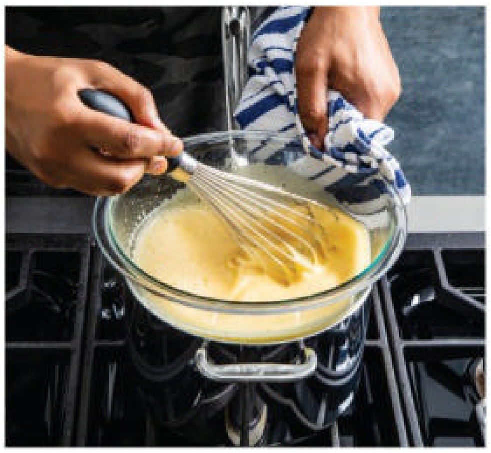
HOW TO MAKE SEMIFREDDO



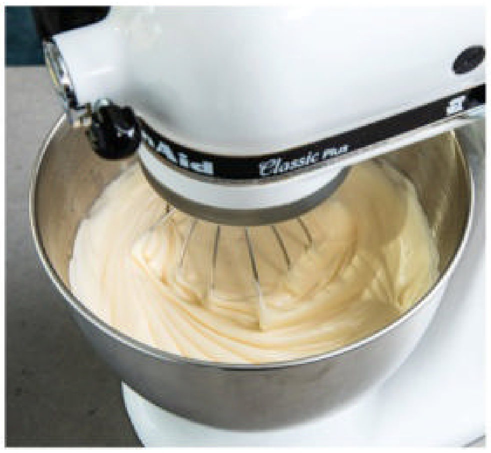
1. Prepare pan Line loaf pan with plastic wrap, leaving 3-inch overhang on all sides.
Why? Plastic wrap prevents the semifreddo base from sticking to the pan in the freezer, and the overhang serves as an anchor to unmold the semifreddo after chilling.



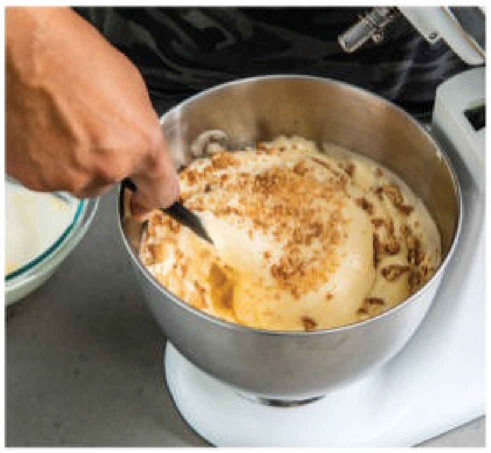
2. Whip cream Using stand mixer, whip heavy cream until soft peaks form and then transfer to bowl and keep chilled.
Why? Whipped cream makes the semifreddo airy and light while maintaining a velvety texture that melts in the mouth.



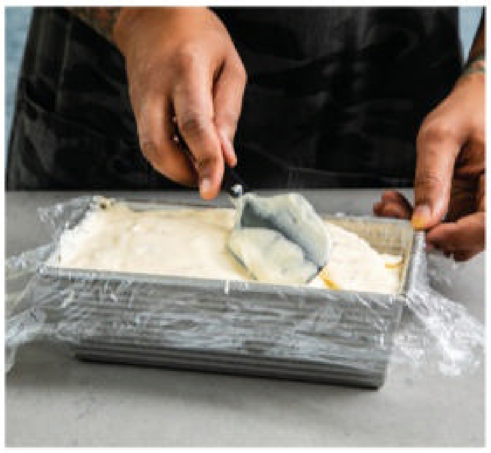
3. Heat eggs Whisk eggs, sugar, and salt in heatproof bowl set over barely simmering water until mixture reaches 160 degrees.
Why? Heating the eggs gently and briefly encourages more aeration when the mixture is whipped. Constant whisking prevents the eggs from scrambling.



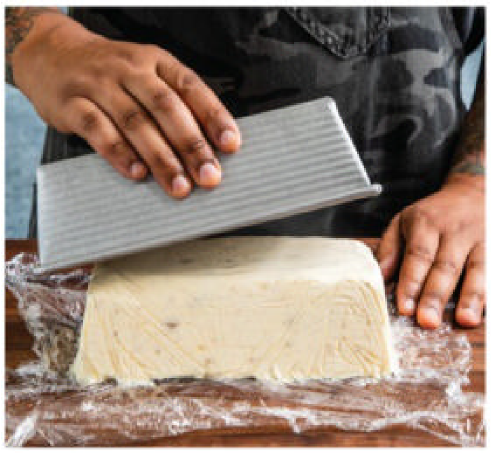
4. Whip egg mixture In clean mixer bowl, whip heated egg mixture until pale, fluffy, and doubled in volume.
Why? Whipping the eggs separately from the cream yields even more air bubbles, creating semifreddo's signature fluffy, mousselike base.



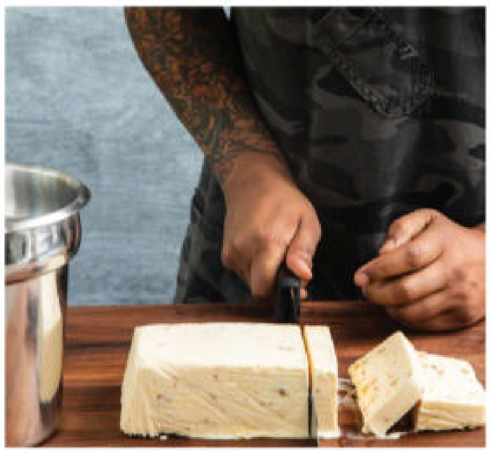
5. Fold in cream Using rubber spatula, gently fold in half of reserved whipped cream and then amaretti cookies; fold in remaining cream until just incorporated.
Why? Gently folding in stages evenly incorporates the amaretti cookies without deflating the whipped base.



6. Smooth and freeze Transfer mixture to prepared pan and smooth top with rubber spatula. Cover with plastic wrap and freeze for at least 8 hours.
Why? Smoothing the top ensures a stable base for the semifreddo once inverted for serving, and thoroughly freezing it ensures that it will be firm enough for slicing.



7. Unmold base Remove plastic wrap from top and invert loaf pan onto cutting board or serving platter; tug on overhanging plastic to release semifreddo from pan.
Why? The plastic wrap provides grip to release the semifreddo from the pan.



8. Slice and serve Dip slicing knife in hot water and wipe it dry. Slice semifreddo about 1 inch thick, transferring slices to individual plates.
Why? A hot knife neatly cuts through each frozen slice, which can be garnished as desired.

Chicken and Potato Stew

This crowd-pleasing family dinner needs just 10 minutes under pressure.

by Nicole Konstantinakos

SOMETIMES WHEN THE pressure is on to get dinner on the table, the solution is to crank up the pressure . . . in an Instant Pot, that is. This homey, comforting stew of chicken and potatoes in a rich, aromatic tomato broth is mild and approachable but full of deep, satisfying flavors and a pleasing array of textures.

Browning the chicken first, using the Instant Pot's sauté function, helps build flavorful fond on the bottom of the pot. And leaving the potatoes in large pieces ensures that they cook in the same amount of time as the chicken (a mere 10 minutes under pressure). Since high temperatures inside the pot tend to dull flavors, we use generous amounts of aromatics—onions, garlic, oregano, red pepper flakes, white wine, and bay leaves—to bolster the stew's character.

Successful cooking in an Instant Pot requires a certain ratio of liquids to solids. If the cooking liquid is too thick, or there's not enough of it, you are nearly guaranteed to burn the pot's contents, since the food will sit too heavily on the base of the pot, above the heating element. To protect our stew from such a fate, we use a 1:1 ratio of marinara sauce and chicken broth, for a total of 3 cups of cooking liquid. (Trust us, if you add more sauce, your stew will burn!) To introduce body, texture, and bright flavor to the stew after releasing the pressure, we stir in extra marinara sauce, along with frozen peas. A sprinkle of Parmesan cheese and a drizzle of olive oil make for a luscious finish.

INSTANT POT CHICKEN AND POTATO STEW

Serves 4 to 6   Total Time: 1 hour

We prefer chicken thighs in this recipe for their deep flavor and richness. If you'd like to substitute chicken breasts, shred the cooked breasts as the peas warm through in step 4 and then return the shredded chicken to the pot before serving. We prefer Rao's Homemade Marinara Sauce; you can substitute other brands of marinara, but the texture of the finished stew may vary. Note that only 1½ cups of marinara are added to the pot before cooking; 1½ cups are added after cooking to contribute texture and brightness to the finished stew. For extra richness, top with a dollop of your favorite pesto.

2½	**pounds boneless, skinless chicken thighs, trimmed**
1½	**teaspoons table salt, divided**
½	**teaspoon pepper**
2	**tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, plus extra for drizzling**
2	**onions, chopped**
8	**garlic cloves, smashed and peeled**
1	**tablespoon dried oregano**
¼	**teaspoon red pepper flakes**
1	**cup dry white wine**
3	**cups Rao's Homemade Marinara Sauce, divided**
1½	**cups chicken broth**
2	**bay leaves**
1¾	**pounds Yukon Gold potatoes, peeled and halved if medium, cut into thirds if large**
2	**cups frozen peas**
1	**ounce Parmesan cheese, grated (½ cup)**

1. Pat chicken dry with paper towels and sprinkle with 1 teaspoon salt and pepper. Using highest sauté function, heat oil in Instant Pot until just smoking. Arrange half of chicken in even layer in pot and cook until well browned on first side, about 5 minutes; transfer to bowl. Repeat with remaining chicken.

2. Add onions, garlic, and remaining ½ teaspoon salt to fat left in pot and cook, stirring often and scraping up any browned bits, until onions are softened, 3 to 5 minutes. Stir in oregano and pepper flakes and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Stir in wine, scraping up any remaining browned bits, and cook until reduced by half, about 3 minutes. Stir in 1½ cups marinara sauce, broth, and bay leaves.

3. Add chicken and any accumulated juices to broth mixture, and arrange potatoes on top of chicken, pressing down gently to submerge potatoes completely in broth mixture. Lock lid into place and close pressure-release valve. Select high pressure-cook function and cook for 10 minutes.

4. Turn off Instant Pot and quick-release pressure. Carefully remove lid, allowing steam to escape away from you. Off heat, gently stir peas and remaining 1½ cups marinara sauce into cooking liquid and let sit, covered, until peas are heated through, about 2 minutes; discard bay leaves. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Sprinkle individual portions with Parmesan and drizzle with extra oil. Serve.

What's Happening in the Instant Pot?

The tightly sealed Instant Pot (an electric pressure cooker) traps steam as liquid inside it heats up, causing pressure to build inside the pot. (Safety valves allow some steam to escape.) At standard atmospheric pressure, liquids such as water boil at 212 degrees Fahrenheit, but as pressure increases, so does the boiling point of water. Inside the sealed pot, temps can reach as high as 250 degrees, resulting in cooking times that are much quicker.

Refrigerator Rhubarb Jam

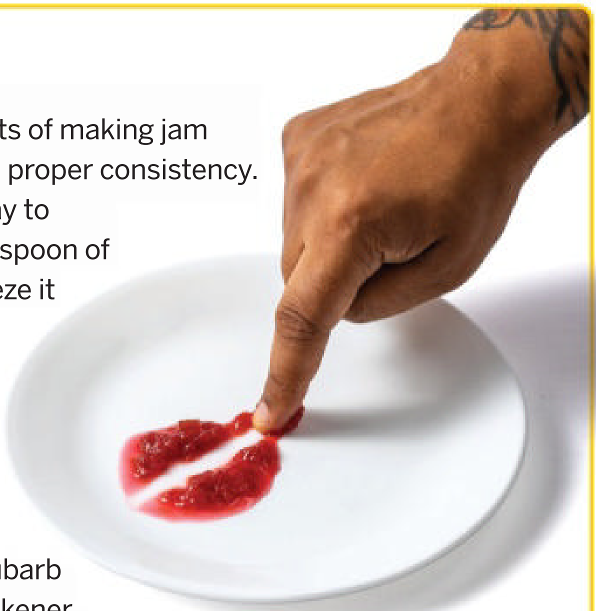
Make rhubarb your jam. ***by Amanda Luchtel***

THIS QUICK refrigerator rhubarb jam is sweet, tart, and easy to make. Plus, it's a fun way to kick off spring. The beauty of a refrigerator jam is that you can make small batches at the beginning (or the end) of a growing season and experiment with a new-to-you ingredient without making a considerable investment.

This recipe, which calls for only rhubarb, sugar, and lemon juice (no strawberries were harmed in the development of this recipe), truly showcases the flavor of rhubarb. Lemon juice helps the pectin gel, and enhancing the mix with a higher ratio of lemon juice than found in most other recipes tempers the sweet notes from the sugar, leaving enough sweeteness to balance the tartness of the rhubarb. To ensure a finished texture without any stringiness (the challenge of rhubarb), it's important to cut the rhubarb into smaller pieces; as a bonus, this also aids in reducing the cooking time.

Once the mixture is cooked to the right consistency (see "The Plate Test"), it just needs to be portioned into jars, cooled, and refrigerated overnight before it's ready to be used in all the ways you can dream up.

The Plate Test



One of the most essential parts of making jam is ensuring that it reaches the proper consistency. The plate test is a failproof way to check this. Simply place a teaspoon of hot jam on a chilled plate, freeze it for 2 minutes, and drag your finger through it. If your finger leaves a distinct trail and the jam is no longer runny, the jam is ready and will set up properly.

How does jam thicken? Rhubarb contains pectin, a natural thickener. Like all fruit, rhubarb also contains a lot of water, which the sugar helps draw out. Much of that water evaporates as the mixture cooks. In order for the pectin to gel, the jam needs to be at the correct pH and the water and sugar have to be at the right proportions. Adding acidic lemon juice lowers the pH of the jam and firms up the pectin from the rhubarb into a jammy gel once cooled. Chilling and testing a small amount of the jam lets you determine whether the whole batch will set up after cooling.

● RHUBARB JAM

Serves 16 (Makes two 1-pint jars)
Total Time: 1 hour, plus 12 hours chilling

Depending on the amount of trimming required, you may need more than 2 pounds of rhubarb to get 7 cups of cut pieces. In addition to sweet applications, this jam is great on a cheese board or added to a glaze for pork or duck.

2 pounds rhubarb, trimmed and cut into ½-inch pieces (7 cups)
3 cups (21 ounces) sugar
⅔ cup lemon juice (4 lemons)

1. Place 2 small plates in freezer to chill. Combine rhubarb, sugar, and lemon juice in Dutch oven and bring to boil over medium-high heat. Cook, stirring often, until rhubarb is softened, about 5 minutes. Using potato masher, crush rhubarb gently, leaving some larger pieces intact. Simmer vigorously, stirring often and adjusting heat as needed to avoid scorching and splattering, until mixture is reduced by about half and registers 215 degrees, 18 to 20 minutes. Remove pot from heat.

2. To test consistency, place 1 teaspoon jam on chilled plate and freeze for 2 minutes. Drag your finger through jam on plate; jam has correct consistency when your finger leaves distinct trail. If jam is runny, return pot to heat and continue to simmer 1 to 3 minutes longer before retesting with second plate.

3. Place 2 pint jars in bowl and place under hot running water until heated through, 1 to 2 minutes; shake dry.

4. Using funnel and ladle, portion hot jam into hot jars. Let jam cool completely; cover; and refrigerate until jam is set, 12 to 24 hours. (Jam can be refrigerated for up to 2 months.)

● CARDAMOM–BLACK PEPPER RHUBARB JAM

Once jam reaches correct consistency in step 2, off heat, stir in ¾ teaspoon ground cardamom and ½ teaspoon pepper.

● GINGER-RHUBARB JAM

Once jam reaches correct consistency in step 2, off heat, stir in 4 teaspoons grated fresh ginger.

Dishwasher-safe models with hard plastic handles saved us from scrubbing.

Measurement markings were a helpful addition; they made it easy to measure and cut pastry without pulling out a ruler.

You Need a **Bench Scraper**

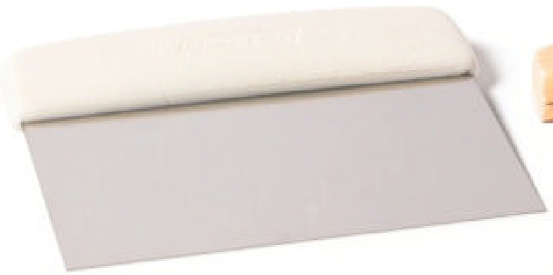
We use bench scrapers for far more than pastry—and we have strong opinions about what makes a great model.

by Chase Brightwell

WHEN I INTERVIEWED for a job at America's Test Kitchen, I was asked "What's your favorite kitchen tool?" The answer was easy: the humble bench scraper. Bench scrapers are the MVPs of professional kitchens, perfect for a variety of kitchen tasks. They were originally designed to help pastry chefs and bread bakers handle dough and scrape their work surfaces (or "benches") clean. They can also be used to chop or slice softer foods, scoop up and transfer ingredients from your cutting board, and more. A few design traits make some bench scrapers work better than others. Read on to learn what makes our top picks worthy kitchen tools.

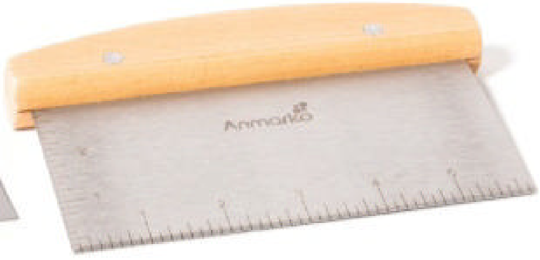
Web subscribers can see the full testing results and complete chart at **AmericasTestKitchen.com/may23**.

OUR TOP PICKS



WINNER

Dexter-Russell Sani-Safe 6" x 3" Dough Cutter/Scraper
Model: S196B **Price:** $13.80
Blade Material: Stainless steel
Handle Material: Polypropylene
Blade Dimensions: 6 x 3 in



HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

Anmarko Stainless Steel Metal Griddle Scraper Chopper
Model: 8541966195 **Price:** $9.99
Blade Material: Stainless steel
Handle Material: Wood
Blade Dimensions: 6 x 3 in

All the Ways to Use Your Bench Scraper

A bench scraper is the ultimate multipurpose kitchen tool. We use one to:

- Cut and shape dough
- Scrape counters clean
- Level ingredients in dry measuring cups
- Cut butter and other soft foods
- Smooth the sides of layer cakes
- Transport chopped ingredients from a cutting board to the stove

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

MODERATE-SIZE BLADES measuring around 6 by 3 inches were the most effective when scraping counters clean or scooping up ingredients. Wider or taller blades felt awkward, and smaller blades were less efficient.

SHARP METAL BLADES were better at slicing through dough and cold butter. Beveling was no guarantee of sharpness; our favorite scraper was not beveled but it was among the thinnest—and therefore the sharpest—blades in the lineup. We also preferred metal to plastic, which was comparatively dull and didn't cut as well.

TEXTURED PLASTIC HANDLES, including the hard, ridged plastic one of our winner, created friction and were easier to grip even when covered with butter and other greasy ingredients. Harder plastic also didn't collect flour or grime as softer plastics often did.

WHAT TO AVOID

CURVED OR TAPERED BLADES made it more difficult to scoop up and transport chopped vegetables and herbs and deposit them in bowls.

PLASTIC BLADES weren't as sharp as metal blades. They didn't cut dough cleanly, which made portioning and shaping difficult.

HEAVY SCRAPERS, weighing more than 6 ounces, were less nimble and slightly tiring to use.

SOFT PLASTIC HANDLES were nice to hold and work with, but they became sticky and grimy over time and collected flour and crumbs.

THICKER HANDLES positioned our fingers awkwardly away from the blade and caused our knuckles to scrape against the counter.

Tasting **Canned Diced Tomatoes**

Our quest for the best version of this pantry staple.

by Carolyn Grillo

WITH LARGE, FIRM pieces of tomatoes not found in crushed tomato products, canned diced tomatoes add texture and sweet, bright flavor to pasta sauces, soups, stews, and more. Supermarket shelves overflow with options, so how do you know which one is best? To find out, we purchased and tasted nine brands of canned diced tomatoes. Seven products contained tomatoes that were grown and processed in the United States; the other two were made in Italy from tomatoes grown there. We first sampled each product plain (unheated) and then we used each to make a simple tomato sauce with olive oil, garlic, and salt.

To better understand the differences across all the products in our lineup, we ran each through a coffee filter–lined fine-mesh strainer. When we compared their strained liquids, we noticed that six were pale and golden in color and three yielded dark-red liquid. Tasters described the tomatoes with golden juices as "fresh," "sweet," and "bright." Two products with dark-red liquid tasted more "cooked" than the others; tasters gave them lower marks for flavor. That said, the third product with dark-red liquid tasted fresh and bright. Many factors go into producing canned tomatoes, including where and how the tomatoes are grown and whether or not the tomato juice added to each can is cooked (and if it is cooked, how hot the juice is when added).

American companies add salt (to improve flavor and balance bitterness), citric acid (to ensure safety and quality as well as enhance tartness), and calcium chloride (to maintain firmness) to their products, while the Italian brands we tasted contained none of these additions. The Italian tomatoes were less seasoned, slightly bitter, and a little soft. Our tasters, mostly Americans, preferred the firmer, sweeter, and saltier canned diced tomatoes. Geographical preferences like this exist across all sorts of foods. Our top brands are American, but both styles have their strengths.

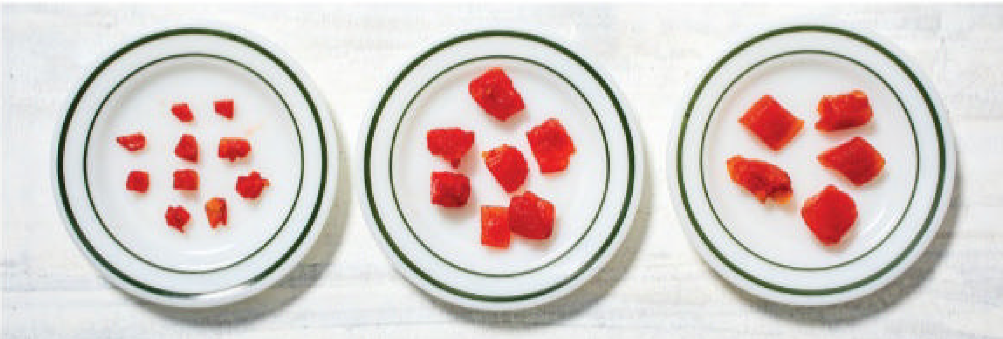
"FRESH,"
"SWEET,"
"BRIGHT"

OFTEN
TASTED
MORE
"COOKED"

We ran every product through a fine-mesh strainer and compared the strained liquids. Some were pale and golden in color and others yielded dark-red liquid.

With Tomatoes, Size Matters

Tomato pieces ranged in size from 0.5 centimeters to 3.5 centimeters. We preferred tomatoes consistent in size and shape, with small to medium (0.5–2.5 centimeter) pieces. Large pieces were "obtrusive" in tomato sauce.



CENTO PETITE DICED TOMATOES	SAN MERICAN DICED TOMATOES	DEL MONTE DICED TOMATOES
(about 0.5 cm)	(roughly 1.6 cm)	(about 3.5 cm)

Our Favorite Tomato

San Merican Diced Tomatoes
Price: $3.69 for 28 oz
Ingredients: Diced tomatoes, tomato juice, sea salt, citric acid, calcium chloride
Average Dice Size: 1.6 cm
Sodium: 270 mg

We also recommend Tuttorosso Diced Tomatoes, Muir Glen Organic Diced Tomatoes, Cento Petite Diced Tomatoes, Hunt's Diced Tomatoes, Contadina Diced Tomatoes, and Del Monte Diced Tomatoes.

Our Winner: San Merican Diced Tomatoes

The tomatoes for our top-rated product, San Merican Diced Tomatoes, are grown and processed in the United States. Tasted plain, they were "sweet and fresh." The pieces "were the perfect size and had a nice bite to them." When cooked into sauce, these tomatoes "retained their firmness."

Web subscribers can see the full tasting results and complete chart at **AmericasTestKitchen.com/may23**.

BONUS RECIPE

Apricot-Honey Sauce

An easy five-ingredient sauce to top your favorite desserts. ***by Kelly Song***

APRICOT-HONEY SAUCE

Serves 6 to 8
Total Time: 15 minutes, plus 30 minutes cooling

We like to serve this sauce with Semifreddo with Crushed Amaretti Cookies (page 38), spooned over cake, or added to a charcuterie or cheese spread.

¾	**cup (4½ ounces) dried apricots, chopped fine**
¾	**cup water**
	Pinch table salt
¼	**cup honey**
1½	**tablespoons lemon juice**

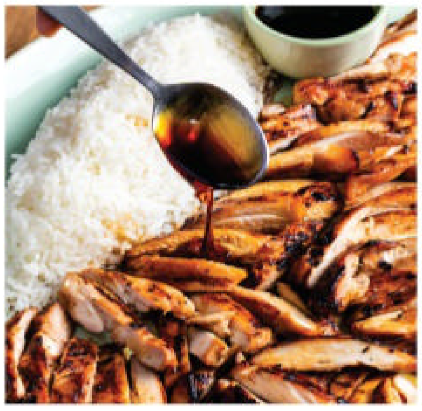
1. Bring apricots, water, and salt to simmer in small saucepan over low heat. Cook, stirring occasionally, until fruit is plump and tender, 6 to 8 minutes. Using potato masher, mash apricots until mixture is mostly smooth but some larger pieces remain intact.

2. Off heat, stir in honey and lemon juice. Transfer to bowl and let cool completely before serving, about 30 minutes. (Sauce can be refrigerated for up to 2 days).

HUNGRY FOR MORE CONTENT?

Visit us on Instagram: ***@cookscountry***

What *Cook's Country* recipes are you cooking at home?
Post them on Instagram with the hashtag **#CooksCountry**.



Find us on Facebook
facebook.com/CooksCountry

Find us on Instagram
instagram.com/CooksCountry

Follow us on Pinterest
pinterest.com/TestKitchen

Follow us on Twitter
twitter.com/TestKitchen

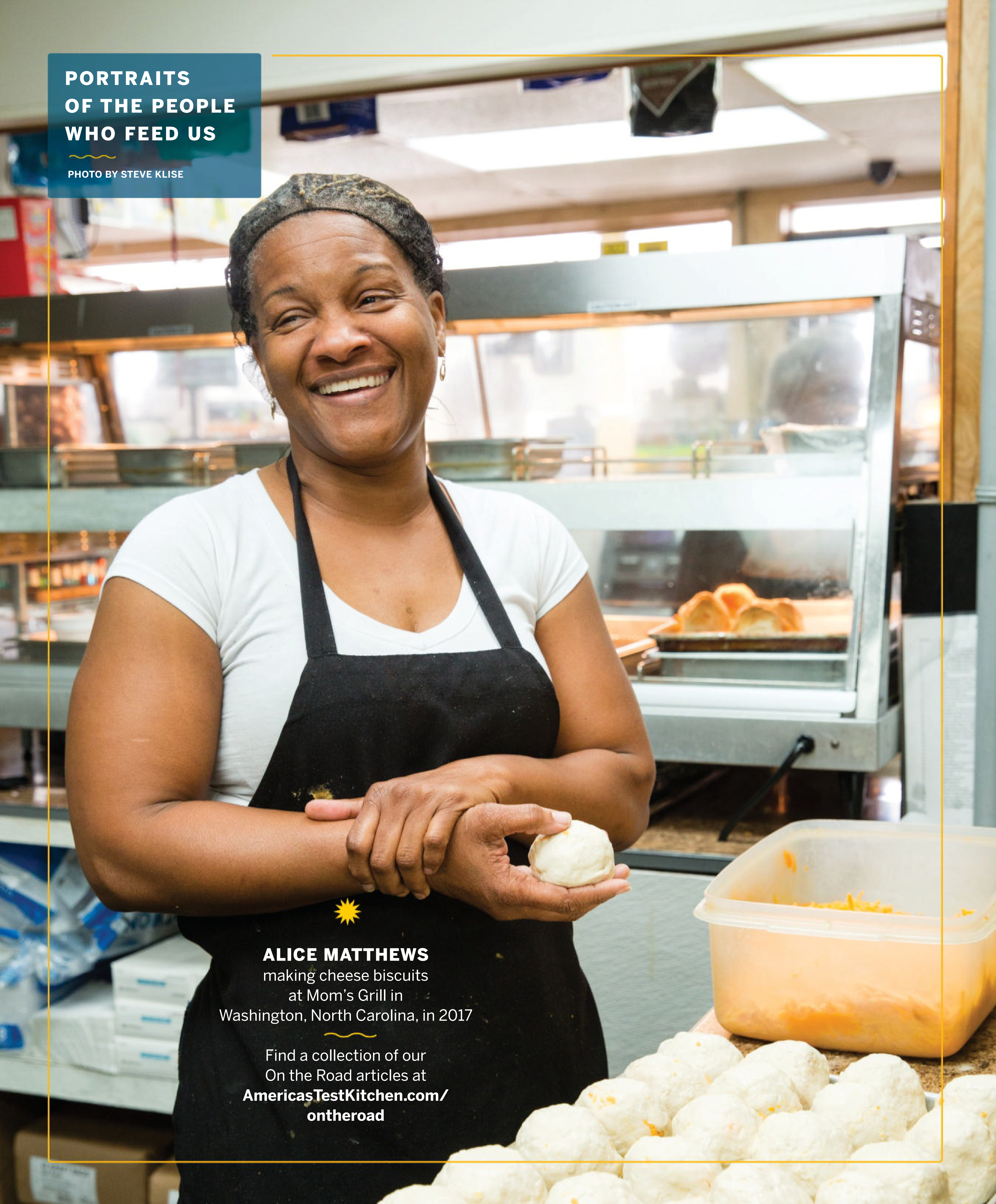
Follow us on TikTok
tiktok.com/TestKitchen

COMING NEXT ISSUE

*Our **June/July 2023** issue will put you in the mood for summer cooking—and eating! We'll be featuring **Regional Hot Dogs**, **Garlic Scape Pesto**, **Grilled Mussels**, **Taco Rice**, and **Melon Salad**. For your sweet tooth, be sure to try our **S'Mores Pie** and **Stuffed Red Velvet Cookies**. Plus, you'll find our usual array of great tips, step-by-step photos, and exceptional storytelling.*

PORTRAITS OF THE PEOPLE WHO FEED US

PHOTO BY STEVE KLISE



ALICE MATTHEWS
making cheese biscuits
at Mom's Grill in
Washington, North Carolina, in 2017

Find a collection of our
On the Road articles at
**AmericasTestKitchen.com/
ontheroad**

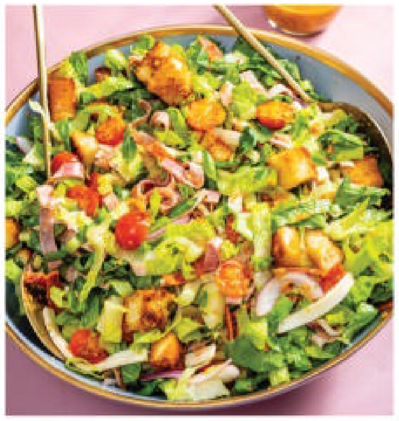
INSIDE THIS ISSUE

9 Grilled Caesar Asparagus

38 Semifreddo with Crushed Amaretti Cookies

15 Shrimp with Garlic and Jalapeño Butter

31 Extra-Cheesy Grits

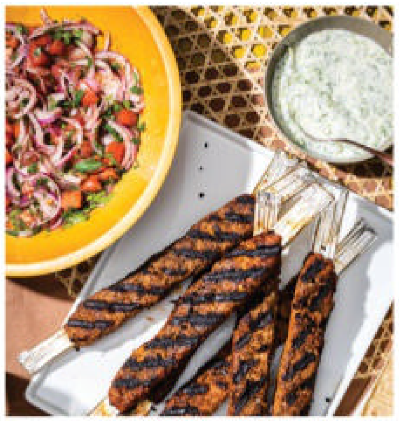

22 Italian Hoagie Salad

17 Frito Pie

12 Lemon-Pickled Radish Toast with Basil and Parmesan

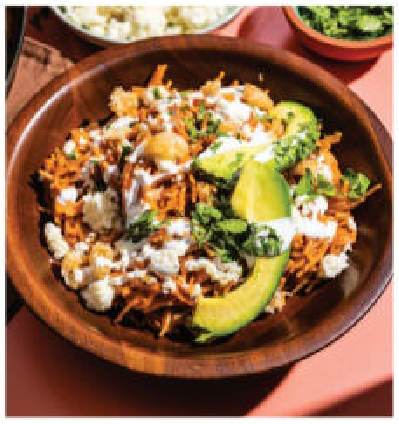
8 Chicago Deep-Dish Pizza

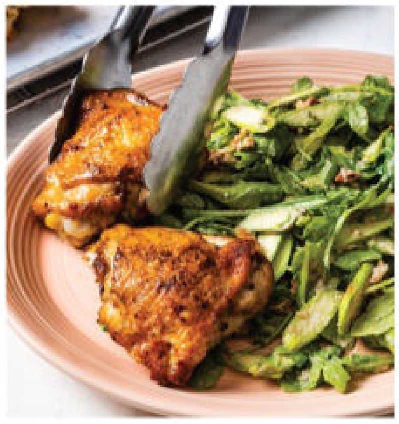
24 Coriander Salmon with Beets, Oranges, and Avocados


20 Grilled Adana-Style Kebabs

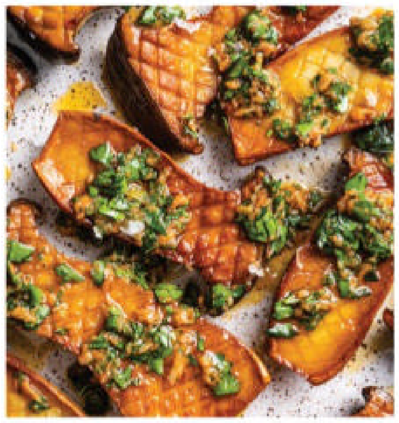
24 Curried Sweet Potato Soup with Spiced Pepitas

24 Mussels and Linguine with ’Nduja Cream Sauce


35 Sopa Seca


24 Roasted Chicken Thighs with Asparagus and Arugula Salad

37 Strawberry Cobbler


25 King Trumpet Mushrooms with Smoked Paprika Vinaigrette

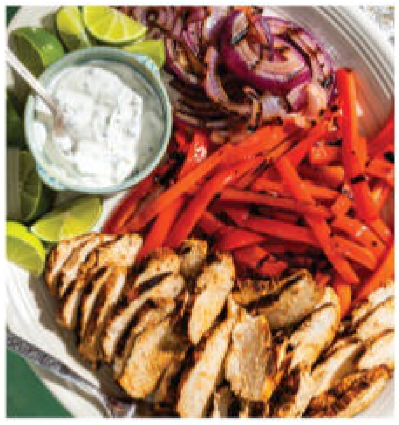
33 Ancho-Pineapple Mezcal Margarita with Tajín

30 Cast Iron–Seared Romaine with Oyster Sauce, Ginger, and Sesame

40 Instant Pot Chicken and Potato Stew

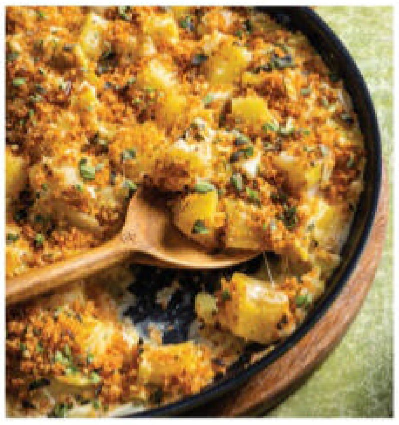
22 Honey-Soy Steak Tips with Roasted Green Beans

11 Braised Pork Marbella


22 Grilled Chicken Fajitas with Cilantro-Lime Sour Cream

29 Miso Black Cod

22 Pork Tenderloin with Blueberry-Ginger Chutney


13 Creamy Potatoes and Leeks